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it requisite to offer the observations contained in the Appendix, he would probably have altered a few of the expressions, and have given a somewhat different form, perhaps, to one or two of the statements. He must, therefore, trust to Dr. Whately's liberality to make whatever allowance that circumstance may, in his estimation, appear to require. Deviations, however, from general rules of this nature, may in many cases become expedient, if not necessary; and on this account, it is not detracting from Dr. Paley's pre-eminent merit in other respects, to consider him as culpable in retaining some few passages in his writings liable to objection, without even noticing the repeated remarks levelled against them by his opponents, and in not openly defending or renouncing some of the opinions which he must have been well aware had engendered either doubt or misapprehension in the minds of his readers. Controversy, it is fully admitted, however temperately conducted, may sometimes be productive of evil, both to the combatants and the spectators, but it equally becomes us to re-

member, that without this intellectual species of warfare, neither the truths of revelation nor the discoveries of science could have triumphed, as they so decidedly have, over the assaults and machinations of their bitterest enemies.

PREFACE.

It is not an unfrequent remark, that the study of metaphysics has been declining in this country for some years past, and that to devote our attention to a subject so remote from the concerns of active life, is little better than a misapplication of time. Were it meant by that term to designate the ontology of the scholastic ages, or the chimerical systems which, at a much later period, were framed by the followers of Plato, Aristotle, and Pythagoras, to say nothing of the more recent speculations of German origin, the truth of

the assertion might be readily admitted. But if, on the contrary, a dispassionate investigation of the powers and operations of the human mind constitutes, as it now more usually does, and as it always ought to do, the legitimate object of that science, the neglect into which it is said to have fallen would afford ample cause for the expression of regret. But the truth is, that if we advert to the various publications that have appeared in our own language within no great length of time on the important topics which it embraces, we shall find that this department of knowledge has not been so much disregarded, as many have allowed themselves to suppose. No writer of eminence, perhaps, has contributed more than Mr. Dugald Stewart, by the peculiar attractions of his style, and the almost uniform correctness of his taste, to revive the attention of the thinking part of the pub-

lic to rational inquiries relative to the mental faculties, and to the practicable means by which they may be more successfully cultivated. But there is another circumstance, which, though not so prominent as to have obtained general notice, must yet be allowed to possess no small share of influence with regard to the point in question. As long as Locke's "Essay on the Human Understanding" shall continue to be made use of as a text-book in the public examinations at Cambridge for a bachelor's degree, (and what other work has yet appeared which, taken as a whole, is entitled to occupy its place?) we have no trifling security that the study of intellectual philosophy can never become entirely obsolete in this country.

That it should not be so much encouraged in the recent plans for affording instruction to the uneducated orders of the

community, can occasion neither surprise nor censure. The different branches of natural science, especially those connected with the mechanical arts, together with the biographical sketches of men whose merit has raised them to distinction, are not only better suited to their comprehension, but are more likely to be advantageous to them in the laborious occupations which they are destined to pursue. But since this is not the case with those whose station in society affords them leisure and opportunity for making more extensive attainments, the philosophy of the human mind ought to hold a prominent station in that liberal course of studies which no man in polished society can now entirely neglect without incurring disgrace. Besides the other numerous arguments in favour of this pursuit, there is one which the purpose of the present publication leads me more par-

ticularly to notice, and that is, the close alliance which subsists between the intellectual and the moral part of our nature. Without some acquaintance with the structure and operations of the human understanding, we cannot investigate with success the source and complex nature of the different emotions and passions in which our actions originate, nor the influence of those moral causes and motives by which the character of individuals is invariably framed. The paramount importance of the knowledge to be derived from the study of ethics will, in the present age, scarcely be disputed; and though no one in a country where the Christian faith is professed, can be entirely ignorant of the practical precepts which are to regulate his conduct, yet the theoretic part also, comprising the origin, the criterion, and the obligation of virtue, merits the diligent examination of

all those whose circumstances enable them to receive a more finished education. It is obvious therefore, that he will come best prepared for studying this branch of the subject, whose mind has been previously imbued with the principles of intellectual philosophy.

Whatever defects may be discovered in the execution, the design of the following pages is to vindicate a theory of morals which has not only been misapprehended by those who have viewed it superficially, but has even been condemned by men of undisputed sagacity, who have unfortunately been too much absorbed in the contemplation of its weaker points, to be able to estimate the solidity of the basis on which it rests. I trust, however, that in this attempt to answer the arguments of Dr. Paley's opponents, I have not violated the rules of candour and courtesy, nor been

deficient in avowing that deference which must at all times be due to those who have enlightened and adorned society by their talents and virtues.

Though I cannot be supposed to regard with any high degree of approbation the great aim of Mr. Stewart in his metaphysical writings, which was to defend and illustrate the doctrines of Dr. Reid, I still conceive that his works have been productive of no small advantage in subduing, by the beauties and the eloquence of his composition, the prejudices of many of those who had before felt an almost insuperable aversion to approach any subject of abstract speculation. But, independently of all theoretic peculiarities, there are many parts of his writings which, while they display the happy facility of the author, in divesting recondite questions of their repulsive form, are replete with observations of the highest

practical utility. His chapters on the association of ideas, on the faculties of memory and imagination, together with his discussions relative to the process of inductive reasoning, might be pointed out as abundantly sufficient to verify this remark; and the extensive information which he possessed in the various departments of science and literature has communicated to the topics of his inquiry a degree of interest, of which the generality of students would have thought them to be altogether unsusceptible.

The majority of Mr. Gisborne's works are too well known to the public, to require any allusion, and the wide circulation which some of them have obtained, is at once an indication of the esteem in which they are held, and of their tendency to improve the manners of society. But I cannot help thinking that his treatise on the "Prin-

ciples of Moral Philosophy" but little corresponds with the character which it received from Mr. Stewart, and may be deemed as the least successful in establishing his conclusions, of any of his publications, with perhaps one exception.—Dr. Pearson was, I believe, better known as an author in that illustrious University where he held a conspicuous station, than to the world at large; and distinguished as he was, by his sound understanding, and his rational and candid manner of examining ethical questions, we can only regret that incidental circumstances should have rendered his works less extensively beneficial than they otherwise would have been, if we may be allowed to judge from the intrinsic merit which they undoubtedly possess.

Of Dr. Brown it is impossible not to speak in terms of high admiration. His

acuteness in reasoning, his freedom from undue attachment to any pre-established system, the warmth of his imagination, his fertile powers of language, and the amiable spirit that breathes through every page, all combine to conciliate the reader's attention, and to inspire him with an ardent wish to become better acquainted with the subject of discussion. And even when they fail in producing conviction, they leave an impression on the mind in the highest degree favourable to the talents and worth of the accomplished author. By far the greatest benefit, however, effected by his metaphysical labours, has resulted from his opposition to that part of Dr. Reid's system, which at once places an effectual barrier against all rigid and extended disquisition, by pronouncing facts to be ultimate when there is sufficient evidence that they are not so, and by assign-

ing to various operations of the mind distinct and peculiar faculties, when they may, in truth, be traced to one common source. It was by contending for the free use of analysis, and by successfully exercising it in his own writings, that Dr. Brown was enabled to accomplish more perhaps than any single philosopher since the time of Locke, (for the vibrations of Hartley have scarcely an advocate remaining,) in extending our knowledge of the mental faculties, or, in his own more accurate language, of "the mind existing in certain states." This remark is, however, chiefly applicable to his examination of the intellectual powers; for in the ethical part of the system he has developed, his views are by no means so enlarged, nor is his mode of reasoning, on many points, either luminous or conclusive.

The declamation in which he is some-

times too fond of indulging, and the repetition of the same arguments and reflections, when uncalled for by any peculiar difficulty in the case, are defects which we can readily pardon. But there is one fault of greater magnitude which is occasionally conspicuous in some of his writings, and against which the nature of the subject renders the exercise of caution doubly incumbent. The want of perspicuity, to which I here allude, most assuredly cannot be attributed, as in the case of Aristotle, to his leaving too much to the perspicacity of his readers from the brevity of his style. It principally arises, as I conceive, from his propensity to refinement when reasoning on abstruse points, and to the construction of his protracted sentences, often interrupted by qualifying clauses and rhetorical allusions. Fortunately it occurs more frequently in his less

known treatise on Cause and Effect, than in the work which constitutes his principal claim to celebrity. Whatever Dr. Brown's defects may be, there cannot be a doubt that they are greatly outweighed by his solid, not less than by his brilliant, qualities; and he must ever be regarded as exhibiting a striking example of the union of a sound judgment with a glowing imagination. With all his excellences, however, there is some reason to apprehend that it will be reserved for another generation to do justice to his character as a philosopher, and to be fully sensible, I will not say of the discoveries, as some of his enthusiastic admirers have done, but at all events, of the essential improvements he has introduced into the science of mind. And that this apprehension is far from being altogether groundless is but too apparent, from the comparative neglect

which he has experienced in his own country, as well as from the fact, that while the writings of Dr. Reid and Mr. Stewart have been translated, or accurately studied by authors so distinguished among the French as M. Royer Collard, (the patriotic President of the Chamber of Deputies,) M. Jouffroy, and the still more celebrated Victor Cousin, no similar notice has been taken of Dr. Brown's works. But whatever popularity the speculative tenets of M. Cousin may have obtained at Paris, there are very few, I believe, in this kingdom, who, with the slightest knowledge of their nature, would entertain a momentary wish of seeing them form part of our English philosophy.

For the freedom with which I have criticised the remarks of Dr Whately, I feel convinced that he will not conceive any apology to be called for by the occasion.

It is sufficiently evident from the general spirit and tone of his writings, that he is not to be classed in the number of those who are deterred by the narrow-minded notions of a particular party, or by a blind predilection for any favourite theory, from dispassionately examining the arguments of their opponents, or from relinquishing a long cherished opinion when discovered to be fallacious. Were the same liberality of sentiment, and the same temperate zeal usually conspicuous in his discussion of controversial topics, more prevalent among the leading members of every denomination of religion, the great doctrines of Christianity would be better understood, and the merits of our own Church less frequently called in question.

Amidst the facilities which are daily increasing for imparting to all classes of the community information of the highest

value, and the measures now pursuing for ameliorating the public taste, we need not despair of seeing the intellectual and ethical branches of science regain that elevated station which they are entitled to hold, and receive that assiduous and extensive culture which can alone render them subservient to the practical purposes of civil society.

For my own part, I entertain not the slightest doubt that the progress of knowledge will eventually prove to be the progress of general happiness. The spirit of investigation, no longer confined to the student's chamber, is now traversing the busy haunts of men, eager for the discovery of truth, and the detection of error. The weak may be alarmed, and the bigoted may oppose: but they will find it too late to indulge the faintest hope of prohibiting the flight of ignorance and torpor

which so long oppressed the human understanding. Unless objections can be devised far different in their nature from any which have hitherto been urged, it requires no inspiration of prophecy to foretel that the efforts which may hereafter be employed to obstruct the diffusion of mental improvement will be found, in the result, to be utterly powerless. This improvement may at intervals, perhaps, be retarded in its career by the prejudices of one party and the interested motives of another; but to put a final stop to its advancement, to fix the boundary beyond which it cannot pass, none but the most infatuated can for a moment imagine it to be possible. As well might the royal Dane have expected that the utterance of his feeble mandate would stem the influx of the ocean's tide.

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VINDICATION,

&c.

ERRATA.

ge 13, line 9 from the bottom, *for* cioê, *read* cioè.
77, — 5, *for* the revelation, *read* revelation.
121, — 3, *for* done, *read* donc, in the French quotation.
145, — omitted in the margin, a reference to the *Quarterly Review*, No. 76.
152, — 4 from the bottom, *for* eternal condition, *read* external circumstances.

our two most ancient and influential Universities, should be scrupulously weighed, and that the objections to which it may have given rise should be impartially scrutinized. For some years past, and, indeed, ever since the return of peace, it is well known that both of these venerable institutions have been crowded with undergraduates, and that at Cambridge in par-

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VINDICATION,

&c.

CHAPTER I.

Of the Objections advanced by Mr. Dugald Stewart.

It is unquestionably a matter of no trifling consequence to the general interests of education, that the merits of every work which has been adopted as a text-book in either of our two most ancient and influential Universities, should be scrupulously weighed, and that the objections to which it may have given rise should be impartially scrutinized. For some years past, and, indeed, ever since the return of peace, it is well known that both of these venerable institutions have been crowded with undergraduates, and that at Cambridge in par-

ticular, the number of students has been so much augmented, as to impose the necessity of extending its collegiate buildings. In the latter University, the work which has long been selected on the subject of *Ethics*, in the principal annual examination for a *Bachelor's* degree, is one which, with all its celebrity, and all its extensive circulation in the remotest parts of the kingdom, has yet incurred the severe censure of many eminent writers, and has even been charged with inculcating doctrines not a little prejudicial to the interests of virtue. But notwithstanding the accusations which have been thus urged against Dr. Paley's "Principles of Moral and Political Philosophy," it would be difficult to point out a publication which has suffered less from frequent opposition, or which has hitherto better sustained its character in the estimation of the public. We have, at all events, a right to infer that the learned body, by whom so decided a preference has been shown for this treatise, cannot possibly regard the principles which it maintains as unfit to be

inculcated on the minds of the young, though it cannot but excite some degree of surprise that no champion from that quarter should have hitherto stood forward in its defence, and that it should have been so long exposed to accusation and obloquy, without any effort to repel their effects.

It is not my intention, however, in the following pages, to enter into an examination of the whole work. On the present occasion, I have confined myself to the consideration of what is usually termed the *theory of morals*, comprehending the origin of our moral sentiments, together with the foundation, the criterion, and the obligation of virtue; and after the severity of censure which has been indulged against the opinions of that eminent moralist on these particular points, I need scarcely apologize for offering a few remarks in justification of the choice which has been made by a body of men, not less deserving of admiration for their liberality, than distinguished by their achievements in learning and science.

Of the numerous writers who have ex-

pressed their strong disapprobation of the theory which is advocated by Archdeacon Paley, it will be sufficient to notice the more eminent; and if it can be shown that the latter have failed in substantiating their charges, it will be needless to indulge any solicitude respecting the others. Mr. Dugald Stewart, Mr. Gisborne, Dr. Pearson, the late Master of Sidney College, Cambridge, and Dr. Thomas Brown, the late able professor of Moral Philosophy at Edinburgh, have all decidedly censured the opinions of our great moralist, though they materially differ from each other in the arguments they have advanced.

The first remarks of Mr. Dugald Stewart, immediately connected with the subject before us, occur in the second volume of his "Elements of the Philosophy of the Human Mind," where he strongly reprobates the practice of confounding *efficient* with *final* causes, and cites the authority of Dr. Adam Smith to show the danger with which it is more particularly attended in treating of Ethics. Of this erroneous mode of reason-

ing, he considers Dr. Paley's work on Moral Philosophy as affording a striking example; and in confirmation of this opinion, he has cited two passages, which, from their apparent tendency, have also excited the animadversion of other authors.* But he has not examined the purport of these passages in connexion with the context, nor does he appear to have recollected that the most unjust inferences are frequently deduced from insulated expressions, which have not always been weighed by the author with sufficient attention.† To me it appears evident, however, that in the application of his remarks respecting the confusion of *efficient* with *final* causes to Dr. Paley, and in his reasoning against general expediency as the principle of moral obligation, he has greatly misapprehended the nature and extent of the real doctrine which that moralist has inculcated.

* Stewart's Elements of the Philosophy of the Human Mind.—Vol. II. c. iv. s. 6.

† Paley's Mor. & Polit. Phil. Vol. I. p 70. (5th Edit.) and Vol. II. p. 411.

I cannot help thinking, also, that Mr. Stewart is chargeable with some degree of unfairness in placing Dr. Paley in the same class of moralists with Hume and Godwin, and thus associating one of the most powerful advocates of Christianity, with two of its most insidious and determined enemies, because they appear to agree in regarding utility as the principle which renders virtue obligatory on mankind. I say *appear* to agree; for if no other distinction could be discovered between writers, who, in reality, possess so little in common with each other, it would be quite sufficient to point out the difference of meaning affixed by these two parties to the same term. In the one case, utility is considered as the sole *obligation;* in the other, as the *rule* or *standard,* to which we are to refer, whenever the rectitude of an action becomes doubtful. According to the former system, the views of the agent are confessedly limited to the present life; according to the latter, he is directed to look forward to a state of existence beyond the grave. It

is not to be denied, however, that Dr. Paley's language is often defective in precision, and that a few instances of obvious inconsistency may be pointed out in different parts of his work. Of this an apposite exemplification is furnished in the first of the passages quoted by Mr. Dugald Stewart: "Whatever is expedient is right. It is the utility of any moral rule alone which constitutes the *obligation* of it,"* &c. But still it is abundantly evident from the context, and the general purport of his work, that what he means to inculcate is, that utility is merely the *rule* or *criterion* of virtue, and is then only to be followed as our guide, when certainty is not to be obtained from the language of Scripture. In a more limited sense, utility might nevertheless be described as the obligation, since there is unquestionably a distinction between the motive which *immediately* influences the conduct, and the *ultimate* motive. Nor is the reality of the latter to be disputed, because it is not always present to the mind, and

* Prin. of Mor. Phil. Vol. I. p. 70.

because inducements less remote in their operation may be sufficiently influential in the ordinary transactions of life. On this account, what has been observed by some writers concerning the divine will, might be applied to *expediency*. It might be made the rule and the motive at the same time; and we might in this manner vindicate the language of Dr. Paley, when he asserts that the utility of a rule constitutes the obligation of it. But, in truth, it would have been more consistent with the Author's former explanation, to substitute the term *criterion* for that of obligation, as we find that he has done in the very next page. Hence we may regard the expression as it here occurs, as nothing more than a verbal inaccuracy, by no means affecting the general reasoning of the work.

Against this system of morals, however, which makes utility the *criterion* of right and wrong, Mr. Dugald Stewart (and several other writers coincide with him) has alleged an objection which he regards as alone decisive of its merits,—that it entrusts

to every individual the power of deciding what line of conduct will, at all times and in all places, be most beneficial to the great bulk of mankind. And I frankly admit, that were this representation true in the extent here supposed, were it always left to the private judgment of each person to ascertain the expediency of his future conduct, in all its bearings, before he should begin to act, not only great perplexity, but the most serious results, might often be apprehended. The truth is, that the eminent writer, to whom this objection is applied, does not sanction this liberty in the latitude here alleged; and as an ample refutation of the charge adduced by his opponents, it would be sufficient to refer to the example of the assassin,* which he has aptly introduced for the purpose of elucidating his meaning. But if still further evidence of this assertion were required, it is only necessary to peruse the admirable observations contained in the chapters immediately succeeding that in which the passage ob-

* Prin. of Mor. Phil. B. II. c. vi.

jected to occurs. He there strenuously contends for the necessity of *general rules* in every moral government; and by moral government, he means "any dispensation whose object is to influence the conduct of reasonable creatures." It is undoubtedly true, that these general rules are founded on the distinction between the general and particular consequences of an action, so well exemplified in the chapters referred to; but then it must be recollected that the rules themselves are not left to be framed by every private individual for his own guidance. The sources from which they are derived, are either the writings of revelation, the laws of the state, or the experience which has led the more instructed portion of mankind to form maxims of wisdom of universal application: and hence it is obvious that the conduct of the great mass of the human race is not entrusted to their own decision respecting what is right or wrong, nor to their own conceptions of what may be most conducive to the welfare of society at large. In Christian coun-

tries, (and to Christians alone does Paley address himself,) the inhabitants may always become acquainted with the positive commands contained in the sacred Volume, more easily perhaps, than with the laws of the government under which they live, and in by far the greater number of cases there can be no room for hesitation in what manner private individuals ought to regulate their moral conduct.

But in those instances in which no specific directions can be discovered in Scripture, general rules must be founded (as, indeed, they are always professed to be, in free countries) on the tendency of particular actions to promote the welfare of the community. On this principle have been framed all the best codes of human laws; and though the actual utility of every regulation cannot always be ascertained without experience, to what other criterion, I would ask, can the statesman refer? It has been repeatedly affirmed, as an argument of great weight, that to determine the utility of actions, when considered with

reference to society at large, is beyond the limited powers of man; but we know that in numerous instances it can be effected, and of this the illustrations adduced by Dr. Paley in his chapters on *general consequences*, afford sufficient evidence. A more apposite example, indeed, of its practicability cannot be found than in the case of legislation; and where the decision is left in the hands of an assemblage of intelligent and patriotic men, I can perceive no substantial cause for the apprehension of danger.* That the frequent exercise of

* Whatever difference many persons may imagine to exist between the science of ethics and that of politics; between the laws enacted by the state, and the moral rules for private conduct; they are both, in fact, framed upon the same principles, and both rest on the same basis. And hence the propriety of combining the discussion of moral and political philosophy in the same treatise. It is not a little satisfactory to find, that so able and liberal a writer as the Marquis Beccaria, in his tract on "Crimes and Punishments," coincides with Paley in many of his opinions, and, amongst others, on the measure of moral delinquency. "Abbiamo veduto,"

the same power entrusted to private individuals would be equally free from objection, I by no means venture to affirm; nor, let it be recollected, is our Cambridge moralist an advocate for any such liberty as is here supposed. On the contrary, he plainly acknowledges, that "between individuals it is found impossible to ascertain every duty by an immediate reference to public utility, not only because such reference is oftentimes too remote for the direction of private consciences, but because a multitude of cases arise in which it is indifferent to the general interest by what rule men act, though it be absolutely necessary that they act by some constant and

he observes, "qual sia la vera misura dei delitti, cioê *il danno della società*. Questa è una di quelle palpibili verità che quantunque non abbian bisogno nè di quadranti nè di telescopj per essere scoperte, ma sieno alla portata di ciascun mediocre intelletto, pure per una maravigliosa combinazione di circonstanze non sono con decisa sicurezza conosciute che da alcuni pochi pensatori uomini di ogni nazione e di ogni secolo."—*Beccaria Dei Delitti e Delle Pene.* Ediz. 27. § xxiv.

known rule or other,"* &c. However requisite the consideration of general consequences must obviously be in the *construction* of universal rules, it can very rarely happen that any person in the ordinary stations of life is called upon to make the calculation for himself. † If the action he is about to commit is manifestly

* Prin. of Mor. and Polit. Philos. Vol. II. p. 412.—Edit. 5.

† "It is on few only and great occasions that men deliberate at all; on fewer still that they institute any thing like a regular inquiry into the moral rectitude or depravity of what they are about to do; or wait for the result to it. We are, for the most part, determined *at once;* and by an impulse which is the effect and energy of pre-established habits: and this constitution seems well adapted to the exigencies of human life and to the imbecility of our moral principle. In the current occasions and rapid opportunities of life, there is oftentimes little leisure for reflection; and were there more, a man who has to reason about his duty, when the temptation to transgress it is upon him, is almost sure to reason himself into an error."—*Prin. of Mor. and Polit. Phil.* Vol. I. p. 43. In the chapter on

contrary to any of these established rules, he is justly taught to regard it as decidedly unlawful, notwithstanding the advantages to which, in his own apprehension, it might lead. Mr. Gisborne, however, argues as if these were not in fact Paley's opinions, because the latter, in his second volume, has introduced an example relative to the right of the subject to resist the tyranny of civil governors, under circumstances in which it becomes unavoidable that each individual should decide for himself. Whether this, or any other exception, can be properly justified, is a question to which I shall have occasion to advert in the sequel of these observations; but what has been so clearly stated by our Author on the subject of general consequences, and more especially on habit, ought to be deemed

Virtue, from which this quotation is taken, the reader will find more to the same effect; but it deserves to be noticed, that the supposed neglect of these very sentiments is always alleged by the opponents of Paley, as affording a strong argument against the truth of his system.

a full confutation of the charges advanced by his opponents on this particular point.

But though it is sufficiently clear that these general rules, whether derived from Scripture, from the law of the land, or from experience, require unhesitating obedience when fully understood; it is nevertheless true that many of them are expressed in terms so *comprehensive* as to leave much to the discretion of those to whom they are addressed. And even when their purport is free from every shade of doubt, the proper *application* of them in numerous cases that actually arise, must depend upon the judgment of the individual. No moral precept is more frequently inculcated in the New Testament, than that which enjoins the practice of charity; and yet in what mode it can best be applied, is a point which leaves room for much deliberation. This virtue, with all its excellence, if exercised indiscriminately, would inevitably defeat its own object; and we need scarcely to be re-

minded that some benevolent plans, which long attracted universal approbation, are now discovered to be indisputably erroneous. Nor can we assign any other reason for this change, than that such plans, if generally carried into execution, would be prejudicial to the welfare of the community. The *congiaria* distributed among the populace of ancient Rome, the stated supply of provisions to the indigent and idle by the opulent monasteries before the Reformation, and in more modern times the periodical donations of money to the poor, so long regarded as meritorious by Christians of every denomination, and which to this hour are not altogether abolished, may furnish examples of a mistaken method of relieving poverty. It is at length beginning to be understood, that whatever tends to diminish the exertions of industry, whatever habituates the poor to expect *that* from the charitable disposition of others which might be procured by their own activity, ought most decidedly to be condemned. We may very consistently applaud the motive, while we repro-

bate the measure. In what particular manner, therefore, the precept which enjoins beneficence towards those in distress can best be fulfilled,* must be left to the

* Though there are few considerate persons in the present day who would not in theory readily condemn every measure which tends to promote an increase of population beyond the demand for labour, or which encourages the imprudence of marrying among the labouring classes before they possess the means of supporting a healthy offspring, yet there are many who in practice utterly disregard the maxims thus acknowledged to be essential to the welfare of society. Notwithstanding the unjust clamour raised on the subject, and which even now has not entirely subsided, the world will at length become fully sensible of the supreme value of the doctrines which Mr. Malthus has so clearly proved and illustrated in his "Essay on Population," and which the present Bishop of Chester has so ably and judiciously defended. It matters not that some few errors of minor consequence may have been discovered in the details of that work: it matters not whether the proportion there stated, between the increase of population and the means of subsistence, be perfectly correct; the leading facts, on which the whole fabric rests, have been shown by

judgment of communities and individuals; nor is there any other method so likely to

subsequent investigation to be substantially true. They have indeed been disputed, but they have never been disproved.

A practical work on the best mode of distributing charity to the poor has long been wanting; and it is much to be wished that some person of liberal views and competent experience would undertake so useful a task. The duty of extending relief to those who are in penury and distress, no one can for a moment call in question; but in what manner this duty should be fulfilled, so as at once to alleviate individual misery and promote the common good, it is not always very easy to determine. All *stated donations* in money, provisions, and clothing, are now justly censured as tending to enhance the evil they were designed to mitigate, by encouraging the indigent to resort to the compassion of others rather than to their own efforts for the supply of their wants, and thus to diffuse the ills of pauperism by the formation of indolent habits. On this account, we cannot approve of the first kind of charitable relief recommended by Paley as the best, in his excellent chapter on *Pecuniary Bounty*. Among the few admissible exceptions, however, there is one channel in which humanity may be

lead to a right conclusion as considering what will be productive of the most ex-

allowed its free course without apprehending any evil consequences, and that is, in alleviating the miseries of those who are labouring under the decrepitude of age, or the deplorable effects of accident or disease.

Among the most eligible modes of improving the condition and diminishing the evils of the laborious orders of society, we may safely enumerate the following:—

1. That which is paramount to all others, the education of the young, including the distribution of the Scriptures and of religious tracts. But in addition to this indispensable instruction in the duties of religion, it would be highly beneficial to the poor to impart to them such other information as may not only teach them economy in the management of their affairs, and prudence in forming the marriage connexion, but may enable them to perceive the absolute necessity of different ranks in civil society, convince them of the folly of discontentment with their lot, and stimulate them to seek for other sources of enjoyment beyond those of the senses.

2. Another admirable mode of exercising beneficence, it is universally admitted, consists in regular subscriptions to hospitals, dispensaries, and asylums for those

tensive advantage. Difficult as the task may sometimes be in cases of a more com-

afflicted with painful maladies of body, or derangement of mind, and to institutions for reclaiming juvenile depravity, or for extricating from embarrassment those whose integrity has made them the victims of successful knavery.

3. A further method of conferring bounty on the necessitous, which, though in some measure perhaps liable to objection, deserves to be recommended, is the distribution of articles of clothing, provision, and fuel, during the *severity of winter*, or in seasons of *great scarcity*, but requiring at the same time the *payment of a small sum* from those who receive these donations. By this means greater economy is ensured in the consumption of the articles given, and the spirit of industry does not experience that check which is the invariable consequence of unconditional gratuities.

In all benefactions, however, of this nature to the poor, there are two circumstances which require great precaution on the part of the donors. If, in consequence of these private charities, the parochial relief before allowed should be withdrawn or diminished, the actual benefit will not be conferred, as it was intended, on the indigent individuals themselves, but on those who are

plicated nature, and where some degree of hesitation is unavoidable, we may still confidently ask—what better criterion can be appealed to than general expediency, for determining the rectitude of the maxims

liable to the payment of the poor's-rates, that is, the landed proprietors, the farmers, and the tradesmen.

In the second place, when any charitable donation is bestowed on a married woman (for example) with a large family in a state of indigence, if the husband is induced, on account of the bounty thus extended, to diminish the portion of his weekly wages which he was in the habit of allotting to the wife, what is the consequence? The woman receives no more than she was accustomed to do, and the benefaction, which was designed to form an addition to the scanty support of a numerous family, serves no other purpose than to enable the husband to squander more at the public-house. These cases, I am sorry to observe, are not imaginary. Their reality is but too well attested by those who are acquainted with the habits of the labouring classes.

It must not be forgotten, that in the distribution of all charitable donations, whether wholly or partially gratuitous, *utility* is the only *rule* which ought to influence our conduct.

which have been framed for the guidance of our conduct? Mr. Stewart, I am well aware, would at once reply, that a much more unerring standard is to be found in the faculty of *conscience*, invariably developed, as it is said to be, in the human mind.

This leads me to the consideration of the objections he has advanced against Dr. Paley's theory in the latest of his publications, entitled "The Philosophy of the Active and Moral Powers of Man;" where he enters with more minuteness into the principal questions connected with ethics, and where his animadversions on the present topic are carried to a greater extent. In the commencement of his observations* to show that the moral faculty is an original principle of our nature, he alleges against that celebrated writer, that he is one of the most zealous advocates of the selfish system of morals, and that he confounds all our notions of duty with a regard to our own happiness. He then proceeds to refute this

* Vol. I. p. 152.

system, (which in truth is wrongly attributed to Paley,) and adduces the following arguments in proof of its fallacy :—that there are in all languages words equivalent to *duty* and *interest*, which men have always distinguished in their signification :—That the emotions arising from the contemplation of what is right and wrong in conduct, are different both in degree and kind from those which are produced by a calm regard to our happiness ; (and here he appeals, by way of illustration, to the emotions produced by contemplating the characters exhibited in history or in novels, or represented on the stage :)—that though a sense of duty and a regard to our own happiness conspire in most instances to give the same direction to our conduct, yet (he observes) the connexion between virtue and happiness is by no means obvious to the common sense of mankind, but is deduced from an accurate investigation of the *remote consequences* of our different actions :—and that the same distinction is strongly confirmed by the *early period of life* at which our

moral judgments make their appearance, long before children are able to form the general notion of happiness, and indeed, in the very infancy of reason.

The facts here advanced Mr. Stewart considers as furnishing a sufficient refutation of the selfish theory of morals; but before he dismisses the subject, he thinks it necessary to notice a doctrine which he describes to be "fundamentally the same, though modified in such a manner as to elude some of the foregoing arguments," and which he believes to be at present the prevailing opinion of moralists in England. "According to this doctrine we do, indeed, in many cases, approve or disapprove of particular actions without any reference to our own interest *at the time*, but it is asserted that it was views of self-interest which originally created these moral sentiments and led us to associate agreeable or disagreeable emotions with human conduct." Thus "a particular action, which was at first approved or disapproved of merely on account of its supposed tendency

with respect to our own interest, comes, in process of time, to be approved or disapproved of the moment it is mentioned, and without any reflection on our part that we are able to recollect."* The author acknowledges that this refinement, as he calls it, on the old selfish system, gives it a degree of plausibility which it did not originally possess, and obviates one of the objections to it already stated; but still he maintains that the others retain their full force.

The argument on which he lays the principal stress is, "the degree of experience and reflection necessary for discovering the tendency of virtue to promote our happiness, compared with the very early period of life, when the moral sentiments display themselves in their full vigour." He warmly combats the answer which is given to this statement—that the generation of these moral sentiments is to be ascribed to imitation, to instruction, and to the association of ideas in the infant mind; and strenuously

* Vol. I. p. 164.

denies that these causes are sufficient to account for the origin of the powers of moral perception, and of our notions of right and wrong. The great object of this writer (as he tells us himself,) is to prove that "the moral faculty is an original principle of our constitution, which is not resolvable into any other principle or principles more general than itself."

But after examining with calmness the several objections which have been here adduced by Mr. Stewart, against what has been termed the selfish system, it is scarcely possible to avoid feeling surprised at observing to how little they really amount, when applied to the theory embraced by Dr. Paley. Thus, with respect to the distinction between duty and interest, it is, in truth, as fully acknowledged by the latter, as by any other writer, though he explains it in a different manner. Duty, according to Dr. Reid and his disciple, Mr. Stewart, is a simple idea, incapable of being defined. But duty and right, it will be admitted, are synonymous; and right is defined by Paley

to be consistency with the will of God. Now as strict conformity with the divine will must not unfrequently interfere with our *immediate* interest, it is impossible that this writer could be said to have overlooked the distinction, even supposing that he had said nothing more on the subject. In his chapter on Obligation, however, he has explicitly stated what he conceives to be the difference between prudence or a regard to our interest and duty; and though he maintains that in the one case we consider what we shall gain or lose in the *present* world, and in the other case, what we shall also gain or lose in *the world to come;* this distinction is abundantly sufficient to answer every moral purpose proposed by those who contend for an instinctive principle of duty, which, while they pronounce it to be imperative, they are unable to define. All that he means to affirm is, that interest and duty are resolvable into what conduces to our present, and what conduces to our future happiness; but still he maintains that they must not be suffered to interfere with each other, and that

whenever a competition arises, the former must invariably yield to the latter. The expression of acting from *a sense of duty* occurs in various places of his Moral Philosophy; and since this evidently implies a regard to the divine will, (which ultimately coincides with a regard to our future happiness,) the distinction contended for is fully preserved, without having recourse to instinct or intuition, and without ascribing to the term any mysterious, undefinable meaning. Whatever proximity may be thought to exist between this Author's notions of interest and duty, and though it is conceded, beyond all question, that they must ultimately coincide, they are yet as much distinguished from each other, even according to this theory, in all that concerns our conduct in the present life, as finite from infinite, as time from eternity.

Again, when Mr. Stewart alleges that the emotions arising from the consideration of what is right or wrong are very different from those which are produced by a regard to our own happiness, and that the dis-

tinction between duty and interest is confirmed by the *early period* at which our moral judgments make their appearance, long before children can form a general notion of happiness; there is nothing in Paley which contradicts these sentiments. On the contrary, he fully admits the truth of this statement, though, from the language of some of his opponents, we might be led to suppose that he actually doubted whether the valour of Leonidas, for example, would excite the admiration of a child old enough to comprehend the narrative, or whether the same child would experience feelings of horror on hearing of the atrocities of Caligula. But whether this moral approbation and disapprobation would arise *instantaneously* in the mind of an untutored savage, similar to the wild boy* caught in the woods of Hanover, could any means be devised

* "Were it possible," observes Dr. Adam Smith, who was decidedly opposed to the theory of utility, "that a human creature could grow up to manhood in some solitary place, without any communication with his own species, he would no more think of his own character,

of relating to him the same historical facts, is a very distinct question, and one respecting which Paley does not pretend to decide, because the experiment is altogether impracticable. The purport of what he contends for is, that these moral emotions are not *instinctive* nor *intuitive*, and that their origin, however early, is easily accounted for, without supposing the existence of any peculiar faculty like the moral sense and conscience of Shaftesbury and Hucheson. Nor is he combating, as Mr. Stewart asserts, a phantom of his own raising, but that theory of morals which maintains that an original faculty is implanted in the human

of the propriety or demerit of his own sentiments and conduct, of the beauty or deformity of his own mind, than of the beauty or deformity of his own face. All those are objects which he cannot easily see; which naturally he does not look at; and with regard to which he is provided with no mirror which can present them to his view. Bring him into society, and he is immediately provided with the mirror which he wanted before."—*Theory of Moral Sentiments*, Vol. I. part III. chapter i.

mind, to inform us of what is right and wrong, without leaving room for a moment's hesitation, and to urge us by the vivid feelings which it excites, to pursue the one and shun the other. That no such unerring guide was ever given to man in his natural state, we have the strongest presumptive evidence, from the practices of savage nations, and even from those which were often countenanced among civilized heathens: and although Mr. Locke's details* on this point are sometimes censured, as being derived from works of disputable authority, the facts furnished by history are more than sufficiently numerous to prove either that no such innate or intuitive moral principles exist, or that, if they do, they are totally inadequate to regulate the conduct of no inconsiderable portion of mankind.†

* Essay on Human Understanding, Book I. c. 3.

† For one who contends for the supreme authority of conscience, and the immutability of the moral principle, the following concession of Mr. Stewart is, I confess, not very consistent. "Where the police, there-

But notwithstanding the feelings of alarm excited in the breast of the amiable Scotch metaphysician, by the principles inculcated in Paley's theory, it will appear to any one who attentively examines the arguments advanced, that these celebrated authors by no means differ from each other so entirely as the language of the former would lead us to infer. Thus, they both agree in believing that there is an essential difference between right and wrong; that, in the great majority of cases, this difference is at once perceived by the mind, long anterior to the exercise of the reasoning powers, and consequently without adverting to the influence of actions on the general welfare; and that this

fore, is weak, murders must not only be more frequent, but *are really less criminal*, than in a society like ours, where the private rights of individuals are completely protected by law, and where there hardly occurs an instance, except in a case of self-defence, in which one man can be justified for shedding the blood of another." *See Philos. of the Active & Mor. Powers of Man.* Vol. I. p. 187.

perception is accompanied with an emotion of approbation or disapprobation.* With regard, however, to the manner in which these moral perceptions and sentiments are generated, there is unquestionably a considerable difference in their opinions. While their origin is attributed by Paley to education, to the imitative powers of the infant mind, and to associations which are formed at so early a period, as to induce many to suppose that the principles themselves are

* In addition to the decisive passage already quoted from Paley's chapter on Virtue, to show that he does not contend for the necessity that the great mass of the people should calculate the remote consequences of actions, I will here appeal to another of similar import in his chapter on Right—(Vol. I. p. 83.) "By virtue of these two principles, that God wills the happiness of his creatures, and that the will of God is the measure of right and wrong, we arrive at certain conclusions; which conclusions become rules; and we soon learn to pronounce actions right or wrong, according as they agree or disagree with our rules, without looking any farther."

innate;* Mr. Stewart pronounces the moral judgments of man to be intuitive, and in-

* It is always satisfactory to know Mr. Locke's sentiments on topics of this nature. "There is a great deal of difference," he observes, "between an innate law, and a law of nature; between something imprinted on our minds in their very original, and something that we, being ignorant of, may attain to the knowledge of by the use and due application of our natural faculties." Again: "I doubt not but, without being written on their hearts, many men may, by the same way that they come to the knowledge of other things, come to assent to several moral rules, and be convinced of their obligation. Others also may come to be of the same mind, from their education, company, and customs of their country; which persuasion, however got, will serve to set conscience on work, which is nothing else but our own opinion or judgment of the moral rectitude or pravity of our own actions. And if conscience be a proof of innate principles, contraries may be innate principles; since some men with the same bent of conscience prosecute what others avoid."—*Essay on Hum. Unders.* Book I. c. 3. Locke's account of conscience would have been entirely free from objection, if he had included the *emotion* which accompanies, with more or less vividness, the judgment of the understanding.

variably to arise on the development of the mental faculties; regarding right and wrong as qualities of actions which affect the mind with as much certainty as the qualities of material bodies affect the senses, and which derive none of their primitive force from considerations of utility. Let it be observed that the disciples of Paley do not deny that a capacity of pleasure and pain is coëval with our birth; but they assert that the operation of the causes he has stated on this acknowledged susceptibility, are sufficient, without the aid of other principles, to account for the power of moral

How erroneously numerous habits, when acquired at a very early period of life, have been identified with instinct, is also the observation of an acute French logician, whose works were at one time in high repute on the continent. Ce sont ces habitudes, qu'on nomme mouvemens naturels, actions mécaniques, instinct, et qu'on suppose faussement être nées avec nous. On évitera ce prejugé, si l'on juge de ces habitudes par d'autres qui nous sont devenues tout aussi naturelles, quoique nous nous souvenions de les avoir acquises." *La Logique, par Condillac.* Première Partie. Chap. IX.

discrimination observable in man, and for the feelings by which it is accompanied.

Why this latter view of the subject should be regarded as productive of so much danger, I confess myself at a loss to comprehend. In comparing the two systems together, we cannot but observe that in one of them there is a degree of mysteriousness attached to our moral constitution, which I cannot persuade myself really belongs to it, and which is certainly no recommendation of the theory itself; while the other is decidedly more comprehensible, and affords at the same time a more satisfactory explanation of the phenomena arising from this part of our mental frame.

The class of moralists, amongst whom Dr. Paley occupies so distinguished a place, admit with as little hesitation as Mr. Stewart's school, the essential distinction between right and wrong, virtue and vice; but they do not rest satisfied with supposing that these are simple ideas incapable of being resolved into any other elements. They very properly extend their analysis beyond

the limits assigned by Dr. Reid and his disciples, and maintain that whatever voluntary actions can be proved to produce permanent happiness, are alone entitled to be denominated virtuous; and those which are destructive of this happiness are for that sole reason esteemed vicious. Mr. Stewart frequently insists on the necessity of regarding *right* and *wrong* as *qualities* of actions. Let it be conceded; but what are these qualities? They are not, as he would represent them, totally inexplicable, but consist in the power which certain actions possess to produce pleasure or pain. That the moral qualities of actions consist in nothing more than their aptitude to promote natural good or evil, is an opinion which has often been defended by eminent and orthodox divines. Dr. Sherlock, the celebrated opponent of South, has expressed himself on this topic with clearness and decision. "Whereas," he observes, "we distinguish between moral and natural good and evil; the only difference between them is this—that moral good or evil is in the *will* or *choice*, natural good or

evil is in the nature of things; that which is good or hurtful to ourselves or others, is *naturally* good or evil; to love, to choose to do that which is good or hurtful to ourselves, or others, is *morally* good or evil; or is the good or evil of our choice or actions. If you will but recollect yourselves, you will find that you have no other notion of good or evil but this. When you say, such a man has done a very good or very evil action, what do you mean by it? Do you not mean that he has done something very good, or something very hurtful, to himself or others? When you hear that any man has done good or evil, is not the next question, what good, or what hurt has he done? And do you not mean by this, *natural* good or evil? Which is a plain evidence that you judge of the *moral* good or evil of actions by the natural good or evil which they do," * &c. Thus, also, Archbishop King, in answering an objection to his mode of reasoning, that it confounds natural and moral evils, which all divines had

* Sherlock on Judgment, p. 20—24.

till then distinguished, observes, that "All evil is inconveniency, but that some inconveniencies arise from the series of natural causes, without our consent, and sometimes our knowledge; these we call *natural* evils: but others happen from the abuse of elections, when an undue choice occasions them; and in this case, besides the natural evil that arises from them, there is likewise an obligation on the person that makes the choice, to answer for the hurt he has done by it. Now these choices that bring inconveniences are called *moral* evils, and the difference between natural and moral evil is not but that they both bring inconveniencies, and hurt ourselves or others, (for therein consists the nature of their evil,) but that the ill effects of the one proceed from the choice, those of the other from natural causes; and hence the author of that choice is answerable for the one, but nobody for the other. Moral evil, therefore, is natural evil with choice superadded."* The same author is not less

* King's Origin of Evil, p. 318. Edit. 3.

explicit in another passage: "It must be observed that elections (volitions) are therefore esteemed evil, because they lead us into natural evils. For if an election contain nothing absurd or prejudicial, it is not a wrong one. Hatred of God, rebellion against his commands, murther, theft, lying, are sins, because they are hurtful to ourselves or others, because they deprive us of natural good, and lead to evil. Elections, therefore, are wrong and undue on account of the natural evils which sometimes attend them. *Natural evils, then, are greater than moral;* for that which makes any thing bad, must necessarily be worse itself."*

This account of virtue and vice is, I cannot but think, much more satisfactory and intelligible than the vague and undefinable notion of an original and immutable *rectitude*, which is supposed to be equally independent of the Divine will, and of the results it may produce; and, which is not less obscure and peculiar in its nature than the eternal principle of monads, which Leib-

* King's Origin of Evil, p. 386.

nitz chimerically supposed to constitute the essence of perception and appetite. Paley, indeed, has not entered into a distinct inquiry relative to the original foundation of right and wrong; but his sentiments are nevertheless perfectly consistent with this view of the subject.* It appears to me, however, I confess, that the question respecting *the origin* of our moral feelings does not possess that importance which Mr. Stewart and

* That this conception of virtue or goodness in the abstract, of those immutable principles which were supposed to be totally unaffected by the external creation,

Quæ neque concursum cœli, neque fulminis iram,
Nec metuunt ullas tuta atque eterna ruinas,

were at variance with the sentiments of the greatest of heathen philosophers, the immortal Socrates, is sufficiently apparent from the following passage in Xenophon's Memorabilia. (L. III. c. 8.) Being asked by Aristippus whether he knew of any thing that was good: Ἆρα γαρ (he replied,) ἐρωτᾷς με εἰ τι ὄιδα πυρετου ἀγαθον; Ουκ ἐγωγ' ἐφη. Αλλὰ ὀφθαλμίας; Ουδε τοῦτο. Αλλὰ λίμοῦ; Ουδε λιμοῦ. Αλλὰ μὴν, ἐφη, εἰγ' ἐρωτᾷς με, εἰ τι ἀγαθον ὄιδα ὁ μεδενος ἀγαθον ἐστιν, οὐτ' ὄιδα, ἐφη, οὐτε δέομαι.

others are so anxious to attach to it. Scarcely any person, I imagine, who has attentively exercised his observation, can be found, who would deny that the major part of mankind are placed in circumstances, which, at an earlier or a later period, give rise to the moral sentiments in the breast, and that these sentiments possess, on the whole, a great degree of uniformity, subject nevertheless to exceptions and variations which a difference of external condition, and consequently of mental culture, will satisfactorily explain. Whether these moral perceptions and feelings are to be deemed instinctive, or whether they derive their origin from the more rational process described by Locke, Hartley, and Paley, the practical results are precisely the same, and the essential distinction between virtue and vice remains unaltered: and hence it cannot but excite surprise, that the latter opinion should have been opposed with a degree of warmth so little justified by the occasion. When we can account for any striking pheno-

mena, whether physical, mental, or moral, from causes which are acknowledged by all parties to be constantly in operation, it is surely, to say the least, highly unreasonable to resort to some other cause, which is not only superfluous and undefinable, but of which the very existence is a subject of dispute. It is not to the mere use of the words *conscience* and *moral sense*, that any objection is made by the followers of Paley: on the contrary, the terms are readily admitted to be extremely useful in the nomenclature of ethics. All that is affirmed is, that the faculty they are intended to designate is neither innate nor instinctive; because, in the first place, such a supposition is not at all requisite; and in the second place, it is destitute of substantial proof. We must not forget the rule of philosophizing laid down by Newton in his "Principia," that "No more causes of the phenomena of nature ought to be admitted, than are known to exist, and are sufficient to explain their appearances."

But however ready Mr. Stewart may be

to admit the truth of this maxim in natural philosophy, yet, with singular inconsistency, its justness, if not expressly denied, is manifestly disregarded both by himself and Dr. Reid, in their theory of mental and moral science. These writers find no difficulty in believing that the attraction of gravitation and cohesion, the various chemical affinities, the attractive powers of electricity and magnetism, may all of them be nothing more than modifications of one simple cause; but when they come to discuss the operations of the human mind, and the moral principles which influence human conduct, their love of simplicity at once deserts them; they condemn those philosophers whose investigations have led them to ascribe mental phenomena to a few adequate causes, and forbid the analysis of many of the more complex operations of the understanding, by pronouncing them to belong to those ultimate facts, which are incapable of being resolved into simpler elements. This mode of conduct, alike favourable to the indolence of some, and the prejudices of

others, has been successfully exposed in the more recent publications of Dr. Brown; nor is it possible to deny, that the serious obstacle which it presents to the advancement of truth, must materially diminish the value of every system in which it is found. However undisputed the merits of such a system may be in other respects, it must at all events be extremely unfit to be adopted by those whose duty it is to promote the diffusion of accurate knowledge, and to encourage a habit of assiduous inquiry.

CHAPTER II.

Reply to the Objections of the Rev. Thomas Gisborne, M.A. Prebendary of Durham, &c.

THE observations of so respectable a writer as Mr. Gisborne, must at all times merit our attention; but after the encomium passed by Mr. Dugald Stewart, on his "Principles of Moral Philosophy," it becomes doubly incumbent on us to examine the arguments contained in that work against Dr. Paley's theory, and to inquire how far they are entitled to be called "quite unanswerable."* Few persons, I should imagine, who have adopted the Christian faith, will hesitate

* Stewart's Philosophy of the Human Mind, Vol. II. Note cc.

in acknowledging, that whenever the Divine will can be clearly ascertained by referring to the pages of Inspiration, immediate conformity becomes our imperative duty, without pausing to consider to what extent it may coincide with our previous sentiments. But "when (as Mr. Gisborne* asks) the Scriptures do not give the detail of moral information which is found requisite, by what rule is the will of God respecting points of morality to be ascertained?" It is in the answer to this question that he considers Dr. Paley's theory to be chargeable with error and danger. In the opinion of the latter moralist, *expediency*, estimated according to the best of our judgment, must alone be resorted to for discovering the Divine will, while, by the former of these writers, the truth of this doctrine is strenuously denied. The arguments, on which Mr. Gisborne chiefly dwells in support of his reasoning, are derived from the alleged difficulty imposed

* Principles of Moral Philosophy examined, &c. Chap. V. p. 90.

by the rule in question on the inadequate faculties of man, and from the abuse to which it must of necessity be constantly liable; but with what justice these objections are described as *peculiar* to the doctrine of *expediency*, will be sufficiently apparent from a brief examination of the theory substituted by Mr. Gisborne himself. In the fifth chapter of his "Principles of Moral Philosophy," he lays down this proposition: "Every man sins against God who does not act in such a manner with respect to the use, defence, and disposal of his rights, as he is of opinion will, on the whole, fulfil most effectually the purposes of his being."* When he proceeds to inquire what these purposes are, he justly observes, "The primary end of the being of every man is obviously to promote and secure *his own final happiness;* an object which he can attain by no other method than by a zealous and faithful obedience to the will of his Maker."† In

* Gisborne's Prin. of Mor. Phil. p. 102.

† Ibid. p. 150.

the same chapter he afterwards adds: "There are subordinate purposes conducive, however, to the principal one already mentioned, which not only his reason, but the very frame and constitution of his nature show that he was formed to answer. These are, promoting the final welfare of his fellow-creatures, and their present happiness, as well as his own."* Again, in the eighth chapter, where he enters more into detail, he tells us that, "since the Almighty bestows no gift but for an end adequate to the value of that gift, there is a presumption, antecedent to all reasoning, that each right of which an individual finds himself possessed, is necessary to enable him to accomplish the purpose of his existence, or at least is adapted to be of material use in promoting them; and consequently that God wills him to retain it. He therefore sins against God if he slights that presumption, and forbears from resisting, by all requisite force, every invasion of his rights; unless he is convinced, by a full

* Gisborne's Prin. of Mor. Phil. p.150.

consideration of the benefits likely to result from his forbearance as well as from his resistance, that the former measure will, upon the whole, conduce, at least as much as the latter, to the ends for which he was created. In the one case, therefore, it becomes no less his duty to forbear, than in the other case it would have been to resist with his utmost ability."* Mr. Gisborne admits, at the same time, that much deliberation is necessary, and that much difficulty occurs in determining when forcible means ought to be resorted to in the defence of our rights.

Let us now observe in what particular points Mr. Gisborne's system differs from that of Dr. Paley. In the first place, it is laid down by the former as an incontrovertible maxim, that "our own final happiness is the primary end of our being;" and that our conduct must be determined by what we believe will best fulfil that purpose. Does not this precisely accord with the "everlasting happiness" expressed

* Gisborne's Prin. of Mor. Phil p. 163.

in Paley's definition of virtue? These two writers agree likewise in thinking that the will of God ought always to be regarded as the rule of our actions; but in cases where the Scriptures are silent, they differ with respect to the mode of discovering that will. It is affirmed by the one, that whatever is generally expedient, that is, whatever tends to promote the welfare of the human species, must be agreeable to the divine will; and hence he regards utility as the great criterion by which our judgment must be formed. By the other it is contended, that this will can only be ascertained by inquiring what will best fulfil the ends of our being; that is to say, first, the final happiness of ourselves; secondly that of our fellow-creatures; and lastly, the present happiness of both. With regard to the difficulty attending this inquiry, the first question which presents itself is, in what respect it is less than that which is involved in the criterion of utility. According to Mr. Gisborne's system, before any person can determine whether any

particular action will best fulfil the purposes of his being, there are four points to be deliberately considered,—its tendency to promote the *final* happiness of himself, and that of his fellow-creatures, and then their *present* happiness, and his own. Now the extent of the examination here enjoined must undoubtedly exceed that which is required by *general expediency;* and if the latter be supposed to be beyond the capacity of the human mind, it will scarcely be denied that the former must be still more so. But Mr. Gisborne's theory not only demands a previous inquiry more difficult in its execution; it is also more liable to the charge of selfishness, which has been so repeatedly urged against that which he so warmly opposes. If the former be admitted, every man is bound to regulate his conduct by what he believes will most conduce to the final and temporal happiness of himself, and then, as a collateral consideration, by what will promote the same objects with regard to his fellow-creatures; whereas in the latter system,

our own individual interest is to make no part of our inquiry in the formation of general rules. The principle of *obligation*, let it be recollected, is a distinct question, and I am now speaking only of the *criterion* of virtue. Whatever after mature deliberation (according to Paley's system) promises to contribute most effectually to the welfare of others, that must be made the *sole rule* of our conduct, without any regard to self; and to that we must steadily adhere at the risk of our worldly prosperity. Mr. Stewart, however, pronounces expediency to be a most dangerous principle* of action, and

* Dr. Adam Smith, for whose opinions this writer always professes the greatest deference, certainly does not evince that degree of alarm which this theory so constantly excites in the mind of his friend. Speaking of the defects peculiar to the three systems of morals, which represent virtue as consisting either in propriety, or in benevolence, or in prudence, he makes the following observation:—"But, notwithstanding these defects, the general tendency of each of those three systems is to encourage the best and most laudable habits of the human mind: and it were well for society, if, either

alleges that it has been appealed to by the most execrable of the human race, to justify the worst crimes. But is the calculation of what will be most likely to secure the greatest happiness of ourselves and others so strongly recommended by the writer, on whom Mr. Stewart has bestowed such unqualified praises, at all less fraught with danger? To me it appears manifest, that if the objections which have been urged against Paley's criterion of utility be well founded, they will apply with much greater force to that of Mr. Gisborne; and that if an inquiry into the general welfare of others, with a view to the regulation of our moral conduct, be attended with difficulty and danger, these evils must be increased in a tenfold degree, when this inquiry is

mankind in general, or even those few who pretend to live according to any philosophical rule, were to regulate their conduct by the precepts of any one of them. We may learn from each of them something that is both valuable and peculiar." *Theory of Moral Sentiments.* Vol. II. part 7. sect. 2.

to be preceded by another in which the passions and prejudices of mankind must more powerfully tend to lead us into error. Our first and principal attention, Mr. Gisborne tells us, must be directed to the consideration of what will best contribute to our individual welfare. Though it be true, that an enlightened regard to our own interest may, and in the opinion of a numerous class of philosophers must, supply the *ultimate motive* to conformity with any moral rule, it ought on no occasion whatever to be allowed to form the *rule itself*. In guarding against danger, we have more to apprehend from the domineering influence of the selfish feelings of our nature, than from the limited extent of the human understanding. It is a singular circumstance, however, that the same writer, who has severely condemned the use which has been made of final causes in some theories of morals, and particularly in Paley's, should so highly approve of Mr. Gisborne's work, in which there is a constant reference to the final cause of the creation of man.

But after all that has been advanced on the subject, the difficulty attending the theory of expediency has been greatly exaggerated. It is the observation, indeed, of the same able, I cannot say unprejudiced, Scotch moralist, that "the discovery of this connexion between virtue and utility, is the *slow result of extensive and philosophical combinations;* and would soon cease to have a foundation in truth, if men were to substitute their own conceptions of expediency, instead of those rules which are *inspired* by the wisdom of God."* Surely this author cannot mean to say, that in all the more flagrant crimes it requires the *divine inspiration* to enable us to perceive their opposition to the well-being of society; or, that we must await the slow result of extensive and philosophical calculations, before we can ascertain their destructive tendency. Is it possible, in any state of society short of the grossest barbarism, not to be aware of the ruinous effects, for example, of murder, adultery, theft,

* Elem. Philos. of the Hum. Mind. Vol. II. p. 510.

and perjury? Or is there any difficulty in discovering, without either the aid of heavenly inspiration, or the delay of extensive inquiry, the advantages attendant upon honesty, temperance, compassion, and charity? And even in those doubtful cases, which sometimes occur in the affairs of real life, as well as in casuistry, neither the dictates of conscience, nor the intuitive suggestions which, according to Mr. Stewart, arise on the exercise of our understanding, supply a readier guide for our actions, than the consideration of their influence on the welfare of society.

With regard to the passage in Dr. Paley's second volume,* represented both by Mr. Stewart and Mr. Gisborne as so highly objectionable, where it is affirmed that "moral philosophy cannot pronounce that any rule of morality is so rigid as to bend to no exceptions;" whether it might have been expressed in a less decided tone, is a point which it is now needless to

* Prin. of Mor. Polit. Philos. Vol. II. chap. xii. p. 411.

determine; but we may rest assured that the author never intended that it should be criticised in an insulated form, nor that it should be interpreted otherwise than in perfect conformity with the principles enforced in the rest of his work. That general rules are absolutely indispensable cannot be disputed; nor has any one enforced this truth with more earnestness, than the eminent moralist whose theory has so often been attacked, with more zeal perhaps than discretion. The only question to be considered is, whether these rules should ever admit of exceptions; and I confess, that in my judgment, the affirmative may very consistently be defended.

Few rules, for example, are more universally acknowledged to be obligatory, than that which prohibits every act of appropriating to ourselves the property of others without their consent. But will any one affirm that the disciples of Christ were criminal in plucking the ears of corn and eating them, as described in the narratives of three of the evangelists? And yet it is

very certain, that if every passenger had followed their example, at the conclusion of the season, not a vestige of that particular crop would have remained for the use of the owner.* But without any reference to the

* When we come to examine a little more minutely the exception here adduced, Dr. Paley's principle of utility will still be found to be applicable. For supposing the practice of plucking the ears of grain to be general, (sufficiently improbable in itself,) to believe that the passengers would confine themselves to one particular field, would involve a yet higher degree of improbability. And if these trifling acts of spoliation (to give them a dignified title) were divided promiscuously amongst all the corn land of Judea, the loss sustained by each proprietor would be too minute for calculation: in other words, no injury would be either inflicted or intended. We find, however, by referring to a passage in the Pentateuch, (Deut. xxiii. 25.) that the practice itself was sanctioned by the Levitical law; and hence the complaint of the Jews was limited to the supposed infraction of the Sabbath. The sequel of the same narrative in the New Testament, furnishes another example that general rules admit of occasional exceptions. The Jewish law, which strictly prohibited every

history of the Jews, it has been remarked, that to take a single grain of wheat from a farmer's barn, or to keep a pin found in the streets without inquiring for its lawful owner, is a violation of *abstract justice;* and that such conduct would be equally atrocious with stealing the whole contents of the barn, or purloining a whole manufactory of pins, if we paid no attention to the injury committed or intended. If the grain of corn were of a particular species, and had been reserved for some agricultural

person except the priests from eating the shew-bread which was weekly deposited in the Tabernacle, (and afterwards in the Temple,) was violated by David and his attendants, as recorded in the first book of Samuel (xxi. 6.) and this violation was expressly justified by our Saviour, in vindicating his disciples against the accusations of the Pharisees. The latter example, it is true, relates solely to an exception to a *positive* command; but it must be recollected, that in the Jewish polity the moral and the positive law were regarded as equally obligatory, where they did not interfere with each other, and that disobedience to either was punished with equal severity.

purpose, or were the pin the first of its kind, and designed for a model, the same act which was before innocent, would then become nefarious.* Thus it is that "general rules must sometimes bend to circumstances."

Again, the precept "Thou shalt not kill," has been regarded by some Christians as strictly obligatory in its *literal* meaning. Such was the opinion of the Latin Father Lactantius, who thus strongly expresses himself: "Itaque in hoc Dei precepto nullum prorsus exceptionem fieri oportet quin occidere hominem sit semper nefas, quem Deus sanctum animal esse voluit."† Such also appears to have been the original persuasion of that singular sect, the Waldenses, who, surrounded as they were by the grossest corruption, might not inaptly be resembled to an oasis in the desert, and by whom our Saviour's sermon on the mount was rigidly interpreted according to the

* See Cogan's Ethical Questions, p. 389.

† Lactant. Opera, lib. VI. De Vero Cultu, p. 369. Edit. Sparke.

letter, and was regarded as applicable, in its strictest meaning, to every succeeding age of the world.* The solemn injunction delivered to mankind not to deprive a fellow-creature of life, demands beyond all question general attention; but to say that it is unlawful for the state to inflict capital punishment for any crime, however atrocious, and that no man, when unjustly attacked, is at liberty to destroy an enemy in his own defence, is to misinterpret the language of holy writ, and to loosen the ties of human society.

If we direct our attention to another instance, no rational man will for a moment venture to deny that compliance with the laws of the country where we reside, and peaceable subjection to the authority of those entrusted with its government, are incumbent on all. But does it therefore follow that we must always submit to the arbitrary acts of every lawless despot who may abuse the power confided to him for

* Mosheim's Ecclesias. History, by Maclaine. Vol. II. p. 455.

the benefit of the people, in harassing and oppressing them? Will not the atrocities of a Tiberius, or a Philip II., be allowed to justify the resistance of those on whom they are exercised? If, then, determined opposition to the destructive measures of a despotic government be on many occasions clearly justifiable,—and that man is undeserving of the name who would dare to dispute it,—who is to judge of the proper time when this right ought to be called into action? Neither Scripture nor conscience furnishes any precise rule to which we can appeal. It can be determined only by the private judgment of the people themselves; nor is there any other criterion to which they can refer, than their own deliberate opinion of what will be most advantageous to the future happiness and tranquillity of the nation at large. The choice of one of two evils presents itself: there is no alternative but submission or resistance. The decision may probably be difficult; but, difficult as it may be, when once a general commotion has taken place, neutrality be-

comes impossible, even to those who would gladly adopt it.

I might adduce as a further confirmation of the necessity of deviating on particular emergencies from general rules, the practice of falsehood and deception towards those who are afflicted with insanity. Is there any one whose judgment is so perverted by mistaken scruples, as to believe that such conduct is indefensible? "Cui unquam viro probo," says Dr. Burnet; "viro pio, religio est, ægrotos, pueros, aut mentis male compotes, in suum ipsorum commodum fallere et decipere?—Malo dolo uti in alterius damnum nefas est; sed ob commune bonum, et ad succurrendum infirmis fallimus et fallimur sine crimine. Est aliquid magis sacro-sanctum et inviolabile in ratione boni quàm in ratione veri; quæ cùm pariter conciliari non possunt, cedit posterius priori."*

* Archæologiæ Philosophicæ. Lib. II. c. 9.

An illustration of the same sentiment is furnished by Locke. "Thus taking from another what is his,

But I hasten to an example afforded by Mr. Gisborne himself, notwithstanding his animadversions on the licence allowed by his opponent. After asserting that "restraints, the original imposition of which was unjust, may in some cases be continued consistently with justice," he alleges as an instance in point, "that the negroes already in the West Indies, though they have been reduced to slavery by the most unjust means, may be detained in that state as

without his knowledge or allowance, is properly called stealing; but that name being commonly understood to signify also the moral pravity of the action, and to denote its contrariety to the law, men are apt to condemn whatever they hear called stealing, as an ill action disagreeing with the rule of right. And yet, the private taking away his sword from a madman to prevent his doing mischief, though it be properly denominated stealing as the name of such a mixed mode; yet when compared with the law of God, and considered in its relation to that supreme rule, it is no sin or transgression, though the name stealing ordinarily carries such intimation with it."—*Essay on Hum. Understanding.* B. II. c. 28. § 16.

long as there is sufficient reason to believe that, if emancipated, they would massacre the planters, and seize the islands." The truth of this position, I readily admit, will not be called in question, except by those who are governed more by a fanatical than a rational love of freedom. But why, we may ask, is the retention of the slaves here spoken of acknowleged to be just? For no other assignable reason than because it is conducive to the welfare of the whole; that is, because this exception to the injustice of inflicting slavery, is, in the estimation of those who are best able to form a correct judgment, clearly *expedient*. Here then, we have another exemplification of the truth of the assertion contained in Paley's chapter on War, respecting the utility of adhering to general rules: "that situations may be feigned, and consequently may possibly arise in which the general tendency is outweighed by the enormity of the particular mischief." *

* Paley's Prin. of Mor. & Polit. Philos. Vol. II. B. VI. c. 12. Edit. 11th. In the passage quoted by

If it be said, and it has indeed been often said, that a system like this must be continually liable to abuse, I should wish to know if any other has been proposed that is exempt from this liability. The dictates of conscience, whether this faculty be innate or acquired, the consideration of the nature and fitness of things, and the suggestions derived from the exercise of reason, may all as easily be perverted to colour the worst motives of the heart, and are equally

Mr. Stewart, there is an additional expression still more forcible, but, which in my edition of Paley, is entirely omitted. This clause immediately follows the words *particular mischief;* "and, of course, where the ultimate utility renders it as much an act of duty to break the rule, as it is on other occasions to observe it." But whether this additional clause be allowed to form part of the original text or not, whoever reads the qualified language of the remainder of the paragraph, will have no just cause for apprehending the injurious consequences which the maxim in question may be supposed to encourage. Mr. Stewart's citation occurs in a note to p. 504 of the second Volume of his Philos. of the Hum. Mind.

capable of affording to mankind a ready "apology for their deviations from the ordinary maxims of right and wrong" The argument against the use of any thing, from its liability to abuse, trite as it is, has too often succeeded with the multitude where every other has failed; but its real value is well estimated by Lord Bacon in his *Novum Organum:* "Should any one object that the arts and sciences may be abused to *evil* purposes, as luxury and wickedness, let this sentiment be allowed to have no weight. The same objection would equally apply to all the most excellent things in the world,—as genius, courage, strength, beauty, riches, and even light itself."

Whatever theory we may profess to follow, that some room for the exercise of his own discretion must be left to the individual in framing his moral conduct, will be found to be unavoidable; and indeed, we are furnished with exemplifications of this truth, where, perhaps, we might least expect to find them,—in the injunctions contained in the inspired writings. It is

sufficient to refer to the precepts which relate to the *malevolent affections*, as they are termed by Dr. Hey, and a few other writers. The indulgence of anger, hatred, and resentment, is frequently forbidden in the sacred Volume, and yet it is satisfactorily shown by this liberal and acute divine, that these passions are not only lawful, but salutary. In the same manner, we are to view the prohibitons in Scripture against killing, swearing, and the use of wine, for example, not as absolutely universal, but as admitting of certain exceptions. On what occasions we are to refrain from these actions, and when they may be lawfully indulged, must not unfrequently be left to our own decision; and this decision must be regulated, as the same author has truly observed, by our persuasion of what will be productive of the greatest good.*

* Discourses on the Malevolent Sentiments, Part I. p. 27. and Part VII. p. 172.

CHAPTER III.

The Objections of the Rev. Dr. Pearson, late Master of Sidney College, Cambridge, briefly considered.

Having examined, with sufficient attention I hope, the objections of Mr. Dugald Stewart, and of Mr. Gisborne, I will now advert to those which have been urged by Dr. Pearson. In the first place, he objects, as several other writers have done, to Paley's *definition* of virtue, observing that the subject matter, as there stated, is not virtue itself, but virtuous actions, and that of the latter only one class is specified.* This

* See Remarks on the Theory of Morals, containing an examination of the theoretical part of Dr. Paley's Principles of Mor. and Polit. Philosophy.

definition was, in fact, borrowed from the last of the essays prefixed to Archbishop King's work on the Origin of Evil, and it must excite surprise that, objectionable as it undoubtedly is, in more respects than one, it should have been retained by Dr. Paley in every successive edition of his Moral Philosophy, during his life time. The author of those Essays, if he agreed, as he appears to have done, with Mr. Gay, (who is known to have written the *Preliminary Dissertation* to the same work of the archbishop,) confined the appellation of virtue to those duties only which refer to our fellow-creatures. Those which regard ourselves individually, he classed under the name of prudence, and the actions which relate immediately to the Deity he termed religious. Hence it is plain why the two latter classes of duties were omitted in his definition. But this was not the case with Paley, who in the very next page adopts the threefold division of the moral duties commonly made use of by ethical writers; a circumstance, let it be observed, which prevents

the student from experiencing any inconvenience from the defectiveness complained of. Again, we admit that in every definition of virtue, reference must be made to the rule or criterion; but this remark cannot be applied to the obligation, which ought to be kept entirely distinct. From the language of the definition before us, we might undoubtedly be led to infer that no action can be virtuous which does not *immediately* arise from the prospect of a future reward. That this, however, was not the meaning intended to be conveyed by Dr. Paley, is perfectly evident from his observations on *habitual* virtue, in the seventh chapter of his second book, to which I have already adverted. But, notwithstanding this explanation, I am free to acknowledge that a want of precision in defining the terms of science, frequently gives rise to errors for which the author is justly responsible.

The definition of virtue chosen by Dr. Pearson himself is, "voluntary obedience to the will of God." But since the term *voluntary* here implies *design*, no actions, it

may be objected, can be deemed virtuous, which are not performed with an express intention *at the time*, of complying with the divine will; though it is certain that, in the majority of his actions, the most exemplary man in existence has not this object immediately in view. Will any one hazard the assertion, that such a man must therefore be destitute of genuine virtue? To remedy this imperfection, the author of an article on "Morals," in Dr. Rees's Cyclopædia, has described virtue as consisting in the conformity of dispositions, and the actions which result from them, to the will of God; and as far as these dispositions imply settled habits, and are sufficiently powerful to produce corresponding actions, this description must be allowed to be an improvement on the former. In point of fact, were we to judge from the variance observable in the language of different ethical writers, it would appear to be no very easy task to frame such a definition of virtue, as shall be liable to no possible objection. When, however, it is

affirmed that "those actions, habits, and affections, which tend to promote the greatest ultimate happiness of the agent, are alone entitled to be called virtuous;" the correctness of the affirmation cannot, with any show of argument, be disputed by those who believe that man is destined for a future existence. Nor, again, can it be denied, that "an *habitual* compliance with the will of God," has an equal claim to the same apellation. The latter does, in fact, virtually coincide with the former; for, supposing the benevolence of the Deity to be fully established, when our actions and affections are habitually conformed to his will, they must, from his also possessing supreme power and wisdom, inevitably produce our greatest attainable happiness. Epicurus unquestionably acted with more wisdom, in contending that virtue was to be considered as only the *means* of obtaining a further object, than his rival of the Portico, by whom it was regarded as *the end* itself. And hence, it may be briefly described as consisting in those actions and

dispositions which naturally produce good, while those which produce evil constitute vice. The purport, indeed, of each of these forms of expression amounts to precisely the same thing; but wherever the divine origin of the Christian religion is fully admitted, the second definition—" habitual conformity to the divine will,"—is so far preferable for the majority of mankind, that it does not impose the necessity of any inquiry beyond the commands of Scripture, except in those cases, in which the latter is either doubtful in its meaning, or is altogether silent.

That Paley himself entertained similar sentiments with regard to the nature of virtue, notwithstanding his objectionable definition, is evident from what he observes of St. Paul, by whom moral rectitude and conformity to the divine will were deemed to be synonymous.* The former, however, has not entered into any elaborate discus-

* See Paley's Chapter on the Duty of Children. Vol. I. p. 378.

sion respecting the primary *foundation* of virtue, as it is sometimes called, or, in other words, what makes an action virtuous, or the contrary, without adverting to the authority of the revelation. On this point, it has been sometimes asked, "whether an action is right, because the Deity commanded it, or whether he commanded it because it was right?" There cannot be a question that when we take into consideration the character of the Divine Being, whatever he commands must be right; and the knowledge that it has been thus commanded, ought to be considered as a sufficient evidence of its rectitude. But still it may be consistently inquired by those who have leisure to pursue the study of ethics as a science, whether the command is the sole cause of this rectitude, or whether the latter arises from some other source, altogether independent of any such command. Dr. Pearson vindicates the affirmative of the first of these questions, while the eminently learned Cudworth, Dr. Samuel Clarke, Dr. Price, and many others,

maintain that moral rectitude is a quality totally independent of the will of any being whatever. I confess, that in my apprehension, the most satisfactory answer which can be given to the questions here stated, is this:—It will scarcely be disputed that no moral laws are framed, and that no actions and dispositions have been enjoined by the Deity, which do not tend to promote the happiness of his intelligent creatures. What is termed the essential difference between right and wrong entirely depends upon this tendency to produce happiness or misery: on no other account is the one commanded, and the other prohibited. That some actions and dispositions are productive of human enjoyment, and others of uneasiness and pain, must result from the relations arising from the circumstances in which man finds himself placed; but as these circumstances could not have any existence if no such being as man had been created, so far the consequent relations may be said to originate with the Creator. When once, how-

ever, the creation of man, such as he is, has taken place, and as long as the constitution of human nature continues unaltered, the same relations will necessarily arise, independently of all ordination, or, in other words, the same kind of actions and dispositions will invariably tend to produce happiness, and those of an opposite character, to produce misery. But let it be observed, that although the *foundation* of the distinction between virtue and vice is to be traced to the relations of certain actions to rational agents, it by no means follows, that the mere view of these differences in the nature of things, can alone create a sense of moral *obligation*, without taking into the account their tendency to affect our welfare.

To arrive at a just conclusion concerning the question whether the difference of right and wrong arises from the relations of rational creatures to the beings and circumstances around them, or whether it originates entirely in the arbitrary decision of the Author of Nature, it is a matter of essential

importance, that we entertain correct notions of his *moral* attributes. Unfortunately much obscurity is frequently observable in the language of writers on Natural Theology, when treating on this particular point; and if it were true, as Bishop Brown, Archbishop King, and others have affirmed, that the qualities existing in the Supreme Being are different, not only in degree, but in their *nature*, from those which bear the same name when applied to man, all that could be said on the subject would be little more than metaphysical verbiage. If we did not refer those qualities of the human mind which imply any degree of perfection to the divine nature in the same sense, except as it regards their infinitude and immutability, how are we to prove the existence of any of those attributes which we are most concerned to believe are real? If it be said that the evidence is derived from the similarity of the effects, then I may ask, why suppose a difference in the nature of the cause?*

When we hear many authors declaiming,

* See the Appendix at the end of this Volume.

as they do, on the justice, veracity, and holiness of God, as qualities which he exercises for their own sake, and without deigning to consider any thing beyond their abstract and eternal rectitude, the whole appears to be mysterious and inexplicable. But on the other hand, when these attributes are regarded solely as referable to the communication of good, and the avoidance of evil, the explanation becomes clear and intelligible. It is at once more satisfactory, and more pleasing, to view justice and holiness, and the other moral perfections, when ascribed to the great Supreme, as nothing more than modifications of his infinite goodness, and as implying that while he condemns those volitions, and the conduct resulting from them, which lead to the production of natural evil, he inflicts on his rational creatures no greater degree of punishment than is strictly requisite for the correction of vice, and for preventing the diffusion of its injurious effects.

In considering what constitutes the

rule of virtue, Dr. Pearson maintains that, "if independently of that which determines the moral quality of actions, we seek for a rule which may serve as an infallible *test, criterion*, or *touchstone* of virtue we seek for that which can nowhere be found."* To a certain extent he agrees with Paley in purport, though not in words. He admits that if the rules of moralists coincide with the *foundation* of virtue, they will hold universally; but since this foundation is, in his opinion, no other than the will of God, it must likewise form the *rule*, and that rule the very same which is established by his opponent; so often does it happen, that owing to the want of uniformity in the language of ethical and metaphysical writers, they appear to differ on points where in reality no difference exists.

Dr. Pearson does not dispute the existence of a moral sense; and though he rejects with Locke the doctrine of innate ideas, he believes in innate tendencies,

* See Pearson's Remarks on the Theory of Morals, &c.

which that philosopher has not called in question; but he at the same time acknowledges that this moral sense does not afford a general rule for our conduct. His objections against resorting solely to utility for our guidance, are similar to those advanced by Mr. Gisborne, and do not therefore require any additional notice. On one maxim he lays particular stress, and considers it as incontrovertible,—that no person can act virtuously who has not always in view obedience to the will of God; but he contends that when our object is to ascertain what the will of the Deity is, with respect to any particular action, we are not confined to one mark or criterion, but are at liberty to make use of any mode by which it may be discovered with the greatest ease and certainty. The eternal fitness of things, conformity to truth, the moral sense, and even general utility, may each, he affirms, be adopted on different occasions, as it may appear to be best suited to the purpose; and in this view of the subject the author of the

article before alluded to in Dr. Rees's Cyclopædia appears to coincide. But in making this assertion, the former writer is apparently chargeable with inconsistency; for while he affirms that the constituent of virtue is voluntary obedience to the will of the Deity, and that no one can be said to act virtuously who does not keep this will constantly in view, he denies that any rule can be found for the guidance of our conduct! Notwithstanding his want of precision, he must, in fact, have intended to apply this remark merely to the different methods referred to of acquiring a knowledge of the divine will, and since they may undoubtedly be attended with error, his remark is so far true, that we have no *infallible* criterion to which we can appeal, where the light of revelation affords no assistance. I am nevertheless of opinion that whatever aid may occasionally be derived from the other sources, the safest and the most effectual method of estimating the moral character of actions (where Scripture is silent) will be found in a regard to their

actual or probable effects on the welfare of society. Difficulties in morals will, unquestionably, occur as well as in other subjects, and all that wisdom can enable us to accomplish, is to adopt that system from which the fewest are likely to arise.

On no point of ethical science has there existed a greater diversity of sentiment, or more confusion of ideas, than on *moral obligation*. Moralists have not even agreed in their definition of this term; and it cannot therefore be surprising that they should materially differ as to the principle in which it consists, and the mode in which it operates. By some writers, moral obligation has been defined to be the necessary connexion that subsists between the practice of virtue, and the attainment of its end, whether by the latter we understand obedience to the will of the Deity, conformity to the dictates of reason, or the greatest happiness of the agent. By Dr. Paley it is described to be "a violent motive resulting from the command of another;" while Dr. Pearson denies that obligation

and motive can in any way be deemed synonymous, and contends that the former term ought to be confined to the *principle* of virtue. "Motive is that," he observes, "by which we are actuated to the pursuit of any object, and refers to the end we have in view. *Principle* is that by which we are directed in the pursuit of our end or object, and refers to the *mode* of obtaining it." Respecting the distinction here laid down, Dr. Pearson is by no means clear in his manner of expressing himself; nor does he offer any satisfactory proof, that obligation refers to principle, and not to *motive*. Several writers of celebrity, it is true, object to regard motive and obligation as bearing any similarity to each other; and though it may certainly be conceded that it is not every motive which can be said to *oblige* the agent, yet it may, on the other hand, be contended that every obligation may be resolved into some efficient motive. This opinion is embraced by moralists of not less eminence, and more numerous perhaps than the former.

Among these are Bishop Cumberland, Puffendorf, and Bishop Law, who, I think have satisfactorily shown that nothing can be said to *oblige* us which is not in some way or other necessary to our happiness. The supposition of physical force is of course entirely excluded;—and in what other way can the will be influenced, except through the instrumentality of motives? * Those ethical writers who, in con-

* Obligatio enim legum naturalium quæ hominibus naturalis dici protest, non adeò tollit liberi arbitrii vires, quin obligati suo periculo alitèr facere possint: sed idoneum suppeditat argumentum seu causam impulsivam sufficientem, cujus consideratione moveatur obligatus ut agat aut ab agendo abstineat, prout ratio vel lex præceperit.—Vinculis enim propriè non astringitur animus humanus. Nihil est quod necessitatem quicquam faciendi aut omittendi menti humanæ de futuro deliberanti afferre potest, præter cogitationes seu propositiones exhibentes indicia boni aut mali, aliis aut nobis ex iis quæ faciemus proventuri. Quoniam autem naturali quâdam necessitate ad bona prævisa præsertim maxima quærenda, ad mala autem fugienda determinemur, hinc dictata illa Rationis quæ faciunt ut

tending for the distinction here alluded to, define obligation to be the necessity of adopting certain means to obtain a definite end, do in reality concur with the opinion of Bishop Cumberland. For when the man of integrity pursues what he believes to be the best line of conduct, is not the object at which he aims, whether it be to secure the favour of the Deity, or his own personal welfare, *the inducement* by which

hæc ex actibus quibusdam nostris proventura esse videamus, necessitatem quandam eos exerendi vel cohibendi nobis inferre dicuntur, et nos *obligare;* quippe bona illa cum felicitate nostrâ quam naturalitèr appetimus, necssariò sint conjuncta, actusque nostri ad illorum assecutionem planè sint necessarii. Ego itaque obligationem moralem sic universalitèr nec incommodè definiri posse arbitror; obligatio est actus legislatoris quo actiones legi suæ conformes eis quibus lex fertur necessarias esse indicat. Actio autem agenti rationali tum necessaria esse intelligitur, cùm certum est eam contineri in causis necessariò requisitis ad felicitatem illam quam naturalitèr adeòque necessariò expetit.—*Cumberland, De Legibus Naturæ Disquisitio Philosophica.* Cap. v. § 26, 27.

he is actuated? Thus, also when Dr. Pearson insists that obligation arises from a principle of duty, he means that we are obliged, by a regard to the divine will; and this, when properly analyzed, coincides with what he admits to be the ultimate motive for the practice of virtue—the attainment of individual happiness. The obligation which is made to depend on the will of the Deity can only, in fact, be derived from the power which he possesses of determining the condition of his intelligent creatures. Not only is it true that our interest and our duty ultimately coincide, but it is also impossible that any thing can be considered as our *duty* which is not equally our *interest*, when viewed in its fullest latitude. *

There is another opinion of Dr. Pearson, in which he differs from the generality of

* Amongst authors of more modern date, Dr. Thomas Brown, we may observe, uses the term *moral obligation*, as synonymous with *moral inducement*.—Lect. V. iii. p. 137.

ethical writers, and which it is not very easy to reconcile with the prevailing notions on the subject. He affirms that the term *rectitude* is totally inapplicable to *motives;* that the latter cannot be either right or wrong in themselves; and that of *principle* alone can these epithets be used with propriety. Does he mean to contend that the merit or demerit of an agent in any particular action, is not determined by the nature of the motive by which he is influenced? Can it be disputed that a man is deserving of praise, if it be ascertained that he acts from right motives, and of dispraise if his conduct proceed from bad motives? To contradict the truth of maxims so universally received, from a regard to verbal minutiæ, is more likely to create confusion of ideas than to facilitate the study of ethics by any supposed improvement in precision of language. Notwithstanding the observations of this intelligent moralist, we may justly ask,—what difference does there, in effect, exist between act-

ing from a right *principle*,* and acting from a right *motive*?

* It seems to be almost universally admitted, that the moral conduct of mankind must be estimated by the nature of the motives by which they are influenced; and this must, of course, depend upon the acquired habits and disposition of the mind. If then the epithets of bad and good, right and wrong, be applicable to the latter, and that they are so no one will attempt to dispute, they may surely without impropriety be made use of to characterize the former. Few terms are more general and more vague than that of *principle*; and unless its purport be immediately obvious to the reader, it must often give rise to misconception in questions which require more than ordinary exactness of reasoning. Dr. Pearson would have been very far from assenting to the two following definitions of that term. "*Principle* in morals," says Mr. Bentham, "may be taken for an act of the mind; a sentiment; a sentiment of approbation; a sentiment which, when applied to an action, approves of its utility, as that quality of it by which the measure of approbation or disapprobation bestowed upon it ought to be governed".—*Principles of Morals and Legislation.* Vol. I. chap. i. sect. 2.

In a very able work on Natural Theology, recently published by Dr. Crombie, the same term is thus ex-

Without entering into an examination of all the different modes of explaining the

plained. "The word *principle*, in its real and primitive import, means *beginning*. Hence it is referred to what is first, either in relation to order or in respect to importance. When it refers to some primary and established truth with which some process of reasoning, commences, or on which it is built, the term is correctly applied, and is perfectly intelligible. It is, for example, a principle in physics, that action and reaction are equal and contrary. When some cause of action, or the source whence it originates, is to be signified, we name this also, with sufficient propriety, a *principle*, a *spring*, or *cause of action*. Thus we say, 'he acts from good principles.' 'The principle from which his conduct proceeded, or by which it was governed, was virtuous.' The term then signifies *beginning*, and hence is transferred to denote a fundamental truth, a motive, or cause of action." Vol. I. chap. i. sect. 7.

It would appear, therefore, that Dr. Pearson's distinction between motive and principle is not sanctioned by good authority.

To show the absurdities into which some men are betrayed in arguing for a doctrine which they are resolved to support, it is worthy of notice that Dr. Reid has ventured to affirm, that motives are not uniformly

the term *obligation*, to be met with in ethical treatises, I am now more immediately concerned with the opinions of that distinguished divine, to whom we are indebted for the most luminous statements which have ever appeared of the evidences of natural and revealed religion; and I confess that I can perceive but little cause

the causes of voluntary actions, though he most inconsistently acknowledges that the merit or demerit of any action depends entirely upon the motive. Mr. Stewart, on the other hand, is disposed to admit that actions always proceed from motives, but denies that the will is determined by what appears to us to be morally best and most eligible at the time. Another writer, Dr. R.H. Graves, (the son of the late Dean,) who is a genuine disciple of Reid, boldly appeals to experience and consciousness, and asserts that a man may "*feel* that he is not necessarily or unavoidably determined by any motive in willing and choosing!!"—See Reid on the Active Powers of Man. Essay IV. c. 4. Stewart's Philosophy of the Active and Moral Powers. Vol. II. p. 495; and Graves's arguments for Predestination and Necessity, contrasted with the Established Principles of Philosophical Inquiry. Appendix I. p. 148.

of objection to the definition he has given of moral obligation. The epithet *violent* may be considered by some persons as indicative of physical force; but it is evident, that by "a violent motive," he means nothing more than an inducement of superior strength; and if the work had been designed for any but those who embrace the Christian faith, it would be objectionable, I admit, to represent this motive as "resulting from the will of another," because, though obligation arises in numberless cases from that source, it may, nevertheless proceed from some other. An unbeliever may consider himself obliged to practise virtue, because, generally speaking, it must be deemed to be the best means of securing *present* happiness; but to those who believe in the divine origin of Christianity, it must be perfectly clear that no conduct, however exemplary, could ever be instrumental in obtaining *eternal* happiness, without referring to *the will of the Deity:* he only has the power of conferring on mankind an endless futurity of bliss,

and from his benevolent decree, therefore, must the chief motive to virtue derive its efficacy.

If we concede that obligation, in its strictest sense, implies only that, in order to attain any particular end, it is requisite that we should adopt the proper means, then in morals it must consist in the necessity of practising virtue for the sake of procuring permanent felicity. But whatever definition we may select, the great object of inquiry, and that which must be regarded as the most essential, is no other than this: —What is it which renders compliance with the precepts of virtue obligatory on mankind? Is it our own greatest happiness, or that of others? Is it the authority of the divine will, or, of the dictates of eternal rectitude? Or, is it derived from the suggestions of conscience, or from the nature and fitness of things? Amidst all the variance observable in the language of moralists, these are, in truth, the questions which have occupied their minds, and employed their arguments. Paley, as we have

seen, identifies moral obligation with the paramount motive which is presented by the prospect of futurity; and we have therefore, only to inquire how far this opinion is justly liable to the severe censures expressed by his adversaries. Notwithstanding the warmth with which Mr. Stewart condemns the practice of confounding *final* with *efficient* causes, they will yet, in morals, be found ultimately to coincide. He allows that the final cause of virtue is the happiness of the agent; and though it s true that the end is not always in our immediate contemplation at the time of action, it furnishes the only solution of the question,—Why are we obliged to comply with the duties enjoined by morality? There may be, and there undoubtedly are, many subordinate reasons which influence the mind, but from this source alone can be derived the final answer, beyond which we cannot proceed. To establish this position is the object which Paley has in view, when he discusses the nature of obligation; and it is only by a reference to the *end*

of our creation, that a conclusive reply can be given to the inquiry. Why am I obliged, it may be asked, for example, to refrain from the commission of fraud? Dr. Cudworth would answer, because the understanding informs us that it is right; if we consulted Hutcheson, his reply would be, because it is the dictate of the moral sense; Hume would allege, because it tends to promote the general welfare of society; and Warburton, because it is the will of God. But why should I act in conformity with what moralists have termed rectitude? Why attend to the suggestions of conscience? Why consult the general welfare of mankind? Why obey the commands of God? There is no absolute incongruity, no contradiction in proposing any of these questions; and the only *satisfactory* answer which can be given is, that by so acting we shall secure our greatest possible happiness.* To proceed farther, and to ask why

* Mr. Stewart indeed observes, (Philos. of the Active and Moral Powers of Man. Vol. I. p. 294.) "It is

we should pursue our happiness, does indeed involve a positive absurdity, because a

absurd to ask *why* we are bound to practise virtue. The very notion of virtue implies the notion of obligation. Every being who is conscious of the distinction between right and wrong, carries about with him a law which he is bound to observe, notwithstanding he may be in total ignorance of a future state." This opinion entirely accords with the philosophy of his master, Dr. Reid, who loses no opportunity of reprobating a minute analysis of the moral as well as of the intellectual faculties. "Such is the constitution of our nature," is his favourite reply to all desire of extended investigation; and it is our business, he tells us, to rest satisfied at a certain point without any attempt at further inquiry. "When men have found," says Locke, "some general propositions that could not be doubted of as soon as understood, it was, I know, a short and easy way to conclude them innate. This being once received, it eased the lazy from the pains of search, and stopped the inquiry of the doubtful concerning all that was once styled innate, &c." A similar remark occurs in Thucydides (De Bello Peloponn. L. 1. c. 20.) *Ὀυτως ἀταλαίπωρος τοις πολλοις ἡ ζητησις τῆς ἀληθειας και ἐπι τα ἑτοιμα μᾶλλον τρέπονται.*

The disciples, however, of the school to which Paley

capacity for enjoyment, and a consequent desire to obtain it, are, it is universally

belongs, do not consent to be guided by the discouraging maxims of Reid and his followers, but very properly endeavour to analyze the faculties and emotions of our nature, as far as it is possible to proceed, without violating the rules of just reasoning. They do not admit that virtue carries with it its own authority, nor will they believe that any thing can ever morally oblige a man to act in opposition to his real happiness, taking the whole of his existence into consideration. Such a mode of conduct, they conceive, might afford a strong indication of fanaticism, but would be no proof of genuine virtue.—The same judicious and liberal writer to whom I have before referred, Beccaria, gives a very different account of the word *obligation* from that of Mr. Steward, or of Cudworth. "La voce obbligazione è una di quelle molto più frequenti in morale che in ogni altra scienza, e che sono un segno abbreviativo d'un raziocinio, e non di una idea: cercatene una alla parola obbligazione, e non la troverete; fate un raziocinio, e intenderete voi medesimo, e sarete inteso."—*Dei Delitti, &c.* § IV. p. 14. Ediz. 27. Pavia.

Notwithstanding the absurdity which Mr. Stewart attaches to the question above stated in the text, Dr. Adam Smith has not considered it as unworthy of an

admitted, inseparable from the human mind.

answer. "When it is asked, why we ought to obey the will of the Deity; this question, which would be impious and absurd in the highest degree, if asked from any doubt that we ought to obey him, can admit but of two different answers. It must either be said that we ought to obey the will of the Deity because he is a Being of infinite power, who will reward us eternally if we do so, and punish us eternally if we do otherwise; or it must be said, that independent of any regard to our own happiness, or to rewards and punishments of any kind, there is a congruity and fitness that a creature should obey its Creator, that a limited and imperfect being should submit to one of infinite and incomprehensible perfections. Besides one or other of these two, it is impossible to conceive that any other answer can be given to this question."—*Theory of Mor. Sent.* Vol. II. p. 256. He afterwards adds, that the system which places virtue in utility, coincides with that which makes it consist in propriety; and that the only difference is, that in the one case the measure of virtue is utility, and in the other case sympathy. Admirable as are the practical observations and precepts contained in Dr. Smith's work, it is remarkable how few moralists have adopted his theory.

That an actual obligation is imposed on man to cultivate certain dispositions, and to perform certain actions, no one ventures to dispute: it is only when we come to inquire *why* they are thus obligatory, that so much discordance of opinion attracts our notice, and often excites our surprise. This variance, however, exists, in some cases, more in appearance than in reality; and as an exemplification of this fact, I need only observe, that those writers who make moral obligation consist in the will of God, do, strictly speaking, coincide with those who derive it from the greatest happiness of the agent; for it is altogether incredible that the divine will should be efficacious in influencing the mind as a predominant motive, without taking into consideration the divine attributes. The mere arbitrary will of any being, viewed abstractedly, could never present a rational excitement to actions at all at variance with the passions and inclinations of the human heart. To represent a sense of *propriety*, a favourite topic with some au-

thors, as sufficient for that purpose, is to use a language better suited to the recluse of the peaceful hermitage, than to him who has mingled in the tumultuary scenes of active life. In complying with the commands of the Deity, is it possible, I would ask, to overlook his power, his wisdom, and his benevolence? Is it possible that the contemplation of these perfections should not produce an irresistible conviction, that obedience will necessarily ensure the favour of him on whom the happiness and misery of his creatures, must at all times depend? If it be said, that although this will probably be the case at first, yet that when once the habit of compliance is established, nothing ulterior to the divine commands will afterwards be regarded, let it be recollected that the very same allegation is equally true, when applied to that theory of obligation which is rejected by many of its opponents, chiefly on account of its interested views.

Notwithstanding Mr. Dugald Stewart's severity of animadversion on what he con-

siders to be confounding obligation and motives with the final cause of our being, it is not a little remarkable that the same author, of whose work he speaks in terms of the highest approbation, so far coincides with Paley, as to believe that happiness is the great end of our creation, and that our conduct must be regulated *solely with a view to the promotion of that end.** In the same manner, Dr. Pearson does not hesitate to acknowledge that the *end* of virtue is the happiness of the individual, and that *private happiness* is the *proper motive* to vir-

* The difference of Mr. Stewart's opinion is abundantly evident, from the observations which occur in the fourth chapter of his second volume, on the Philosophy of the Human Mind. Speaking of the unity of design in the moral world, he thus expresses himself:— "It does not follow from this, that it is from such a comprehensive survey of the consequences of human conduct, that our ideas of right and wrong are derived, or that we are entitled, in particular cases, to form rules of action to ourselves, drawn from speculative conclusions concerning the *final causes* of our moral constitution."

tuous conduct. "For though, in fact," he observes, "the end which God designed in the actions of man, is not always the motive to the agent, yet we may safely affirm, that, when known, it *ought* to be so." This differs but little, in substance, from Mr. Gisborne's statement. It is singular, however, that many ethical writers make no distinction between the *immediate* and the *ultimate* motives of human conduct. The former may, in many cases, be sufficient to regulate the actions of the great mass of mankind; but however adequate and proper these motives may be for the ordinary transactions of society, it becomes those of more cultivated understandings, and who have more leisure to philosophize, to recur, at times, to the motives which lie more remote, and to analyze, as far as it is practicable, every incentive that operates on the mind, to its elementary principles.

It has been alleged, as another objection against our great Cambridge moralist, that he restricts the motive in which he believes

obligation to consist, to the happiness of *the life to come*, without noticing the *present* advantages of virtue; while, according to Hume, on the other hand, this motive is nothing more than the desire of *temporal* happiness. In Dr. Pearson's estimation, in order to render the motive perfectly correct, the present and the future should be conjoined, comprehending, by this means, the *general happiness* of the individual. But, if we recollect that Dr. Paley openly professes to be writing for those only who believe in the truth of revelation, the objection will, in truth, be devoid of force; for whoever aims at obtaining *everlasting* happiness, does, generally speaking, secure his *temporal* happiness; but even when they are found to clash with each other, and amidst the turbulence and temptations of the world, this will sometimes unavoidably happen, still it is true that, by sacrificing his present enjoyment, he is taking the wisest means of obtaining the greatest amount of felicity on the whole. If we advert to the case of the heathens, and of

unbelievers, though it is not to be denied that virtue is more frequently conducive than vice to the well-being of mankind, even in this life, yet innumerable situations present themselves, in which the assertion is manifestly untrue. What inducement then can those moralists who reject the feeble guidance of conscience, offer to the infidel to abandon any nefarious but advantageous project which he finds may be accomplished with perfect impunity? The latter can feel no incentive to relinquish the gratification of his worst passions, or the practice of fraud and treachery, in all those cases where he has nothing to apprehend from the laws of his country; nor do I perceive how the obligation which consists in the greatest amount of individual happiness in the *present* life, can be applicable to those extraordinary deeds of valour and self-devotion recorded in the pages of ancient history. How could the return of Regulus, for example, to Carthage, when fully aware of the tortures which awaited him,

Atqui sciebat quæ sibi barbarus
Tortor pararet,*

be consistent with his greatest ultimate happiness? Or, how are we to account for the magnanimity of Codrus, the Fabii, Mutius, or the Decii, on that principle alone? There cannot be a doubt that they acted from the predominating impulse of the purest patriotism. But still the question returns, why they should yield to a patriotic incitement so utterly incompatible with their personal welfare, supposing a future existence to be excluded from their belief. Whatever principle we may assign to these and other extraordinary deeds of the ancients, it is perfectly clear that we must not make choice of the *general happiness of the agent*;† and hence it fol-

* Horat. Lib. III. car. v.

† It would be extremely difficult to discover the moral obligation to perform many of the splendid deeds recorded in ancient history, without supposing the authors to possess a confident expectation of a future existence. Cicero, it is true, has observed in his Tusculan Questions, that "Nemo unquam sine magna spe immortalitatis

lows, that the adoption of this form of expression, recommended by Dr. Pearson,

se pro patria offerret ad mortem;" but the prevalent belief, I apprehend, is expressed with more truth in the beautiful lament of Moschus on the death of Bion. The flowers of the garden, he exclaims, though they perish, again spring into life the following year; not so even the illustrious of the human race:

Ἄμμες δ' ὁι μεγάλοι και καρτεροι ἠ σοφοι ἀνδρες,
Ὁππότε πρῶτα θάνωμες ἀνάκοοι ἐν χθονι κοίλᾳ
Εὕδομες ἐῦ μάλα μακρον ἀτέρμονα νήγρετον ὕπνον.

IDYLL. III. v. 103.

A sentiment of the same kind occurs in Catullus, not to mention numerous passages of similar import in other authors:

Soles occidere, et redire possunt:
Nobis, cùm semel occidit brevis lux,
Nox est perpetua una dormienda.

Car. V. v. 4.

The opinion of the eternal duration of the human soul was confined to a comparatively small number of speculative philosophers; and though the enthusiasm of Plato and Cicero on this question has called forth the finest displays of eloquence in their writings, we are yet compelled to ask whether all the arguments they have advanced, when united, and placed in the strongest light,

is no improvement upon that which he has thought proper to condemn.

amount to any thing at all approaching to a legitimate proof. The *Phædo* alone of the Athenian philosopher would furnish a sufficient answer to this inquiry; for as the Roman orator was a disciple of the Academic school, he rarely deviated from the doctrines of its founder.

Dr. Brown, arguing the question on a different gound, would say, that the neglect of any act of heroism, similar to those alluded to, which an individual was convinced would conduce to the salvation of his country, would be followed by his own disapprobation, and that of others, and that in this consists the real obligation. If it could be shown that the pain arising in the mind of Regulus, for example, from not returning to Carthage, would have exceeded that inflicted by the atrocious cruelty of his enemies, then it might be allowed that he was morally obliged to act as he did. But supposing it were possible to prove the fact, though I believe that very few, if any, of the heroes of antiquity, were at all influenced by considerations of this nature, the motive would be most indisputably selfish, and would therefore be totally inconsistent with Dr. Brown's peculiar system.

Again, by Mr. Bentham it would be alleged, that if deeds of this kind appeared to the agents likely to pro-

cure the greatest portion of happiness to the community, this circumstance alone must be regarded as constituting the obligation. But why is a man obliged to sacrifice all his prospects of comfort here, in order to promote the well-being either of his own country or of the world at large? It is impossible, we acknowledge, to avoid admiring, at the moment, such instances of patriotism and disinterestedness; but when we come to examine the question more closely, we shall perceive that no human being can ever be under an obligation voluntarily to submit to an evil which he at the time believes that no power on earth, no changes in the universe, can possibly repair. Respecting Mr. Bentham's admired work on "Morals and Legislation," in which it is apparent that he has devoted more of his attention to the latter of these branches than to the former, I shall only observe that it betrays much inconsistency in his manner of applying the principle of utility. When he describes "the greatest amount of happiness" to be the *rule* of our conduct, which he does in his first chapter, he so far agrees with Paley; and where he considers it as the *sole obligation*, (Chap. II. sect. 19,) his opinion is closely allied to that of Hume. His commentators, however, maintain, that the great object he has in view, (though it is certainly mentioned in a very summary way, Chap. XVII. sect. 6. & 7,) is to show that every

man, by consulting the greatest happiness of the community, adopts the surest method of securing his own. If the truth of Revelation be admitted, there can be no question that this position may be fully established; but without this admission, the attempt would as clearly fail. In numerous instances it will not be denied that the assertion may be just; but since there are many cases in which the most patriotic sacrifices would be attended by no such result as is here predicted, I must again ask,—what can morally oblige any rational agent to pursue the welfare of the public, with pain, poverty, and ruin staring him in the face, and without the remotest prospect of any future recompense for all the immediate sufferings which this class of moralists consider him as called upon to undergo?

With this palpable defectiveness of explanation, we must at length agree with Dr. Young when he speaks of

> Virtue, which Christian motives best inspire,
> And bliss, which Christian schemes alone ensure.

In a word, to solve the difficulties and doubts created by the facts alluded to, is a task which, without the aid of Christianity, we cannot hope to accomplish.

CHAPTER IV.

The Objections of Dr. Brown considered.

THE last of Dr. Paley's opponents to whom I have referred, is Dr. Thomas Brown, late professor of moral philosophy in the University of Edinburgh; a man of unquestionable genius, and to whose sagacity we are indebted for the detection of several of the errors contained in the metaphysical system founded by Dr. Reid, and so zealously advocated by his disciple, Mr. Dugald Stewart. On many topics, however, Dr. Brown's judgment was influenced, imperceptibly to himself, by his poetical talents; and the warmth and acuteness of his feelings, though they frequently added to

the beauty of his style, were far from contributing to the correctness of his reasoning.

His charge of selfishness against Dr. Paley's principle of moral obligation, will appropriately exemplify what I have here asserted; and although other writers coincide with him in the same sentiment, I know of no one who has expressed himself in more unmeasured language than this eloquent Scotch professor. "This form of the selfish system," he observes, when treating of the modifications of that system, "which has been embraced by many theological writers of undoubted piety and purity, is notwithstanding, I cannot but think, as degrading to the human character, as any other form of the doctrine of absolute selfishness; or rather, it is in itself the most degrading of all the forms which the selfish system can assume."* The reason he alleges for making the latter assertion is, that the selfishness of which he

* Brown's Lectures on the Philosophy of the Human Mind. Vol. IV. p. 91. 2nd Edit.

complains is, in the present case, rendered more offensive by the image of the Deity which it continually presents to the mind—"not to be loved, but to be courted with a mockery of affection." From the purport of this strong language, so little accordant with the spirit of philosophical investigation, we must infer that it is infinitely more degrading to direct our views to the attainment of an eternity of happiness, than to be devoted to the fleeting gratification of the animal passions. And such, indeed, extraordinary as it may appear, was Dr. Brown's deliberate opinion! "The sensualist of the common system of selfishness, who never thinks of any higher object in the pursuit of the little pleasures which he is miserable enough to regard as happiness, seems to me, even in the brutal stupidity in which he is sunk, a being more worthy of esteem than the selfish of another life." In the next chapter also, he indulges in a similar strain, and describes the theory in question to be, "in its very essence, as truly selfish as if it had

defined virtue to be the pursuit of mere wealth or fame, or of the brief dignities, or still briefer pleasures, of this mortal existence."* These extravagant sentiments, which have more the appearance of proceeding from the fervour of an ill-disciplined imagination, than from the calm exercise of the reasoning powers, carry with them their own refutation. Whether there can be the slightest degree of justice in applying the epithet *degrading* to the act of recurring to a future existence for motives to present obedience, is a question which I shall have occasion to notice in a subsequent page. Nor do I admit that the opinion which regards obligation as consisting in the *general* happiness of the individual, involves any thing which can justly be called degrading, though I willingly concede, that it is more liable than the former, to be abused by the ill-disposed or the ignorant, and particularly by those who deny the truth of revelation. To the latter class, indeed, that is, to those who confine their

* Ibid. p. 98

views to the present world, it can never be satisfactorily proved that an undeviating adherence to virtue will ensure the greatest amount of individual happiness. Though this would undoubtedly be the case were *all* mankind resolved to follow its dictates, yet circumstanced as the world is at present, and influenced as its affairs now are by the tumultuary passions of the human heart, innumerable situations must occur, in which the best of men may be reduced to irremediable misery, and which may be solely attributable to their high sense of honour, and to principles too exalted for the corrupt practices of those around them. Remote, I apprehend, must appear, even to the most sanguine, that hitherto unattained state of society in which the *mens sibi conscia recti* will be regarded by mankind as an ample reward for resisting the seductions of vice, and suffering in the exercise of duty, without the faintest hope of obtaining a more durable compensation.

But if we examine this charge of selfishness a little more attentively, its basis will

appear to be devoid of solidity. In the first place, with regard to the present life, the system of Archdeacon Paley demands the sacrifice of every personal interest, the moment it is found to *interfere* with the *higher duties* of our nature; and a strict compliance with general rules is imperatively required, at the risk of losing our dearest and most valuable enjoyments. In the next place, though the prospect of happiness in a future existence is declared to be the ultimate motive of our conduct, it is not denied that the most elevated degree of virtue is that which is practised without any direct view to its ulterior consequences; and if this opinion is not stated by Paley in these precise terms, it is sufficiently sanctioned by his observations on *habitual* virtue. After citing his own definition, he thus speaks: "yet a man shall perform many an act of virtue without having either the good of mankind, the will of God, or everlasting happiness, in his thoughts. How is this to be understood? In the same manner as that a man may be

a very good servant, without being conscious at every turn of a particular regard to his master's will, or of an express attention to his master's interest; indeed, your *best* old servants are of this sort; but then he must have served for a length of time under the actual direction of these motives, to bring him to this." &c.* And thus it is with virtue in general. The powerful incentives arising from the hopes and fears of futurity must operate for a long period, in the majority of cases, before they can produce virtuous *habits*, and especially the habit of sacrificing our private interest to the welfare of others; but supposing the habits here spoken of to be once firmly established, those urgent motives will no longer be requisite, and the performance of every duty will be, in the strictest sense of the word, *disinterested*.

But, in point of fact, how extremely rare are the instances in which this perfection of the moral powers is ever attained by mankind! Such is the weakness of

* Prin. of Mor. Phil. Vol. I. b. i. c. 7

human nature, and such are the external circumstances by which we are surrounded, that the prevalence of perfect disinterestedness is altogether hopeless. Nor, indeed, do I conceive that the intrinsic value of well-formed habits consists so much in their exemption from interested views, when directed *solely* to an existence *hereafter*, as in the assurance they afford that the virtuous dispositions possessed by the agent, will be permanent in their duration, and uniform in their effects. I can never concede that an enlightened regard, in the mind of the genuine Christian, to his felicity in another state of being, ought to be considered as detracting from the merit (if that term be ever allowable) of the duties which he performs with zeal and punctuality. That *selfishness*) though I deny the propriety of applying this word in its ordinary import to the present case) must be a truly desirable quality, which inculcates the practice of the purest disinterestedness in all our transactions in the *present life*, and which has so often led those who have

felt its influence, to abandon every earthly comfort, and even to endure the severest torture, for the sole purpose of promoting the good of mankind.

The same opinion which Dr. Brown has maintained on this question, with so much warmth of feeling, is not less zealously defended by the celebrated German metaphysician, Emanuel Kant, in his treatise on conscience. It is stated, however, by Madame de Staël, that his opinion has been successfully combated by other German writers; and I cannot help quoting her own intelligent remarks on a point which she evidently viewed in its proper light. "Kant a prétendu que c'étoit altérer la pureté désinteressée de la morale que de donner à nos actions pour but la perspective d'une vie future; plusieurs écrivains Allemands l'ont parfaitement réfuté à cet égard; en effet, l'immortalité céleste n'a nul rapport avec les peines et les recompenses que l'on conçoit sur cette terre; le sentiment qui nous fait aspirer à l'immortalité est aussi désinteressé que celui des

autres; car les prémices de la felicité religieuse, c'est la sacrifice de nous-mêmes; ainsi done elle écarte nécessairement toute espéce d'égoïsme." *

There yet remains an argument, in reply to the accusation in question, of still greater weight, and one which I should have imagined would carry with it irresistible conviction. If the ultimate motive derived from the expectation of a future existence is justly condemned as selfish and degrading, then are we authorized to apply these epithets, in their fullest force, and with all the odium attached to them, to the *religion of Christ*. Future rewards and punishments are constantly presented to the view of its disciples; and by these sanctions, every precept it contains, and all its exhortations to imitate the example of its divine founder, are powerfully enforced. There is scarcely a chapter in the New Testament in which some reference to the same end does not attract the reader's notice; and if the disinterestedness contended

* De l'Allemagne, Tome III. ch. 14. p. 206.

for by Dr. Paley's opponents be indispensably requisite to constitute genuine virtue, it becomes a necessary inference, that the sacred writers have been guilty of the grossest errors, and that their followers have to the present hour been lamentably deceived. What sentiment more strikingly pervades almost every page of the Christian Scriptures, than that which is expressed in the following citation?—"For he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is the *rewarder* of them that diligently seek him."* If we read our Saviour's sermon on the mount, do we not perceive the same truth perpetually inculcated, the same exhortation to disinterestedness in this world, and the same excitement of hopes and fears with regard to the next? To those who are persecuted and slandered, what is the motive which our Lord holds out to patient endurance, and even to exultation under the severest treatment? "Rejoice and be exceeding glad; for *great is your reward in heaven.*" What is the language which

* Heb. xi. 6.

he employs when exhorting his disciples to unostentatious charity, to frequent prayer, and to avoiding hypocrisy? "Thy father which seeth in secret, shall *reward* thee openly." And does not the sublime description which closes the twenty-fifth chapter of our first Gospel, speak as forcibly to the same effect, and hold up the most solemn promises and denunciations, as incitements to the practice of compassion and beneficence? Again, if we consult the Epistles, do we find that the first promulgators of the Christian religion, in their arduous efforts to benefit mankind, lost sight of their future reward? Were not the early converts of that faith urged "to press toward the mark for the prize of their high calling," and "so to run the race that was set before them," as to obtain—not the mere approbation to their own consciences—not the bare satisfaction of having acted in conformity with the fitness of things, with the principles of eternal rectitude, or with the suggestions of right reason,—but "an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that

fadeth not away?" Where shall we find a brighter example (if we except the Saviour himself) of the purest disinterestedness, as far as relates to the present sphere of action, than that which is afforded by the great apostle of the Gentiles? No man laboured more abundantly, endured severer hardships, or made a greater sacrifice of all that is thought essential to human comfort and tranquillity. But did he on that account turn his view from the prospect of the ever-during recompense promised by that religion to the propagation of which he devoted every mental energy and every bodily exertion? On the contrary, when the period of his martyrdom was not far distant, and the infliction of death appeared to be inevitable, was he not animated by the joyful hope which, though it had never forsaken him, now beamed on his heart with redoubled splendour, and which he has described with all that fervour so characteristic of his style? "For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I

have finished my course, I have kept the faith; henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day."* And if any further confirmation of what is here advanced could possibly be required, we find that the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews has applied language of the very same import to our blessed Saviour himself, "who for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God."† If, then, the immediate disciples of our Lord were thus influenced and encouraged by his example and precepts to look forward to a state of happiness hereafter, are their followers in succeeding ages to close their hearts against every similar feeling, and studiously to banish from their view all those powerful incentives by which the great founder of our faith so constantly enforced his instructions and commands?

It does, indeed, appear to me most un-

* 2 Tim. iv. 7. 8. † Hebrews xii. 2.

reasonable to maintain, as Dr. Brown and other moralists delight to do, that the circumstance of being influenced by the prospect of retribution in another state of being, at once deprives the actions of men, however strictly conformable to the Divine will, or however extensively beneficial to the world, of every pretension to virtue, and renders the most painful sacrifices of all that can render life desirable, to the good of others, as little entitled to be deemed meritorious as the most flagitious dereliction of acknowledged duty. It is, in effect, nothing less than to affirm that the heroism of the illustrious heathens, to whom I have alluded in a former page, was decidedly *superior*, in point of virtue, to the martyrdom of the apostles and primitive believers, who voluntarily shed their blood in attestation of the truth of the most momentous, though, if we accede to the principles of this party, the most selfish, doctrine of the Christian religion. For it is unquestionably true that neither Codrus, nor Leonidas, nor Regulus, could expect any other conse-

quence from his patriotism, in his own person, than certain death, and utter annihilation, since they had no evidence to disprove the latter; while the followers of Christ, so far from not indulging any hope of recompense for their self-devotion in the cause of the religion they had embraced, extended their expectations beyond the confines of mortality, to a reward far exceeding their most exalted conceptions. Were we to listen to the class of moralists of which Dr. Brown is so strenuous an advocate, they would willingly persuade us to regard the patriotic heroes to whom I have referred, and those who imitated their example among the nations of antiquity, as alone entitled to the praise of virtue, and to consider the humble apostles as men who, with all their ostensible excellence, were not less truly selfish in their views, than those who confine their search of happiness to the objects of sensuality. That they would venture to express themselves in this explicit language, when speaking of the promulgators and champions of Christian-

ity, is certainly more than I would undertake to affirm; but that such is the legitimate inference to be drawn from the principles maintained in the lectures of that amiable Scotch philosopher, it is not possible to deny. Nor will it avail to say, that these future rewards are to be regarded as the *sanctions,* and not as the obligation, of exemplary conduct; a distinction which has been made by some writers, but which, in truth, has no solidity. For what does the term *sanction* imply, but the proposal of a more powerful motive than any before existing, and which is adapted to operate more effectually on every mind that has been properly formed? And in this view, therefore, it will obviously coincide with the *obligation* contended for by our Cambridge Divine.

When we see an author of pre-eminent talents thus indulging in a style of severity so ill according with questions of a speculative nature, which can be decided by reasoning alone, and not by impassioned declamation, we cannot help inquiring what was the principle of obligation

which he himself embraced. In that part of Dr. Brown's work devoted to the examination of this point, his opinion is thus explained. "Persons acting in a certain manner excite in us a feeling of approval; persons acting in a manner opposite to this, cannot be considered by us without an emotion perhaps as vivid, or more vivid, but of an opposite kind. Why does it seem to us virtue to act in this way? Why does he seem to us to have merit, or, in other words, to be worthy of approbation, who has acted in this way? Why have we a feeling of obligation or duty, when we think of acting in this way? The only answer (he proceeds to observe) which can be given to these questions is the same to all, that it is impossible for us to consider the action without feeling, that, by acting in this way, we should look upon ourselves, and others would look on us with approving regard; and that if we were to act in a different way, we should look upon ourselves, and others would look upon us with abhorrence,

or at least with disapprobation." * Now I should wish to ask in reply—what is the influential principle here described but one of pure selfishness? If we are to understand the language of this writer in its natural import, the only reason why we are to consider ourselves obliged to conform to the precepts of virtue is derived from the feeling, that we should thus secure our own approbation, and that of others; and the only consideration which is said to restrain us from an opposite conduct, is the consciousness, that by adopting it we should incur the abhorrence of ourselves, and of those around us; though I am free to acknowledge that, selfish as this principle undoubtedly is, it is never likely to become dangerous from its extensive reception. Notwithstanding, however, the opinion which Dr. Brown has so explicitly expressed respecting the nature of virtue, and the obligation which it imposes, he

* Lectures on the Phil. of the Hum. Mind. Vol. III. p. 533. 2nd. Edit.

strenuously denies in his fourth volume,* that it is at all obnoxious to the charge of selfishness, which it was natural for him to anticipate. This charge, he observes, "arises chiefly from the pleasure which truly attends our virtuous affections, but which though universally attending them, it seems to require no very great nicety of discrimination to distinguish as their *consequence*, not their cause." I certainly agree with him in believing that, in point of fact, it is not with the view of experiencing the pleasure attendant on beneficent actions, that such actions are in numberless instances performed. But if this feeling of satisfaction which follows a virtuous act be regarded, according to his system, as the *obligation*, it must in that case necessarily possess an influential power over his general conduct, which will so far, therefore, deserve the name of selfish. It is impossible that the man who admits of no other obligation or incentive to obedience than the knowledge that the latter will be followed

* Brown's Lect. Vol. IV. p. 74.

by feelings of complacency, and an opposite conduct by feelings of remorse, can claim with justice the merit of disinterestedness.

But to perceive how inconsistent this writer is in the arguments he employs in support of his theory, we need only recollect the doctrine which he constantly inculcates, that "virtue is *a relation*, and nothing more," that is, the relation of a certain class of actions to the emotions of approbation which they excite in the mind.* In making this assertion he appears to have forgotten that according to his own system

* Dr. Brown maintains that virtue, obligation, and merit, are terms which denote the same feeling modified by the difference of time, at which we regard the action exciting that feeling as present, future, or past. "To feel this character of approvableness in an action which we have not yet performed, and are only meditating on it as future, is to feel the moral *obligation*, or moral *inducement* to perform it; when we think of an action in the moment of volition, we term the voluntary performance of it *virtue;* when we think of the action as already performed, we denominate it *merit.—Brown's Lectures.* Vol. IV. p. 138. (2nd Edit). This explanation, the

of mental philosophy, *a relation* cannot arise without either the perception or the conception of *two or more* objects at the *same time*.* Hence if we contemplate any action separately, it is impossible that *any feeling of relation* can exist in the mind, and the same may be said if the emotion of approbation be regarded singly. But if this latter emotion must of necessity take place *at the very time* when we are contemplating the action, in order to enable us to perceive any relation between them, how can moral approbation be said to be the *consequence* of a virtuous action. Such, however, is Dr. Brown's assertion, and he is therefore reduced to this dilemma. If the action *precedes* the emotion of complacency, then how can the latter operate as the principle

author believed would tend to remove that indistinctness of conception so common on these topics; but the attempt, I think, is as little calculated to answer that purpose, as Dr. Price's "Review of the Principal Questions and Difficulties in Morals," was to dissipate the obscurities of former ethical systems.

* See Brown's Lect. Vol. II. sec. 45.

of obligation, even allowing the propriety of his own definition? If, on the other hand, a virtuous action *follows* the feeling of approbation with which it is viewed, or if a crime is avoided on account of the abhorrence which the previous conception of it produces, it can no longer be affirmed that selfishness is excluded.

It can be no violation of truth to affirm that if Mr. Stewart's opinions respecting the criterion and obligation of virtue are unsatisfactory and ill-supported, those of Dr. Brown are still more so. According to the latter moralist, the feeling of approbation constitutes the sole rule of what is right, and the only inducement or obligation which can lead us to practise it. A doctrine more pregnant with pernicious consequences, were it really adopted as a permanent principle of conduct, is not often advanced; for if every action which excites emotions of complacency in the mind of the agent is to be regarded as virtuous, there are but few nefarious deeds in the catalogue of human crimes which might

not at different periods, have laid claim to that character. "Le larcin," says Pascal, "l'inceste, le meurtre des enfans et des pères, tout a eu sa place entre des actions vertueuses."* In short, if these emotions are to be thus highly estimated, we might almost ask, why the brutes themselves may not be deemed capable of performing moral actions. And yet this amiable philosopher, and, on many points, powerful reasoner, rejects Archdeacon Paley's principle of obligation, because he considers it to be dangerous and degrading!†

But whether, in conformity with Mr. Stewart's system, moral obligation be re-

* Pensées de Pascal, Première Partie, Art. VI.

† "For such is the stuff that man is made of: in principle and in practice, in a right track, and in a wrong one, the rarest of all human qualities is consistency."—*Bentham's Principles of Morals and Legislation.* Vol. I. p. 7.

I forbear to notice other indefensible points in Dr. Brown's theory of ethics, as they are not immediately connected with the objection which we have here been considering.

garded as consisting in the paramount authority of conscience, or whether, according to Dr. Brown's theory, it be thought to originate solely from the feelings of approbation excited in the mind; that man must be little acquainted with the actual state of human nature, or with the history of human society, who can imagine that these feeble incentives would avail to any extent against the perpetual assaults of temptation, and the powerful excitement of the passions. In the one case, a faculty of the mind is declared to be a faithful guide, though very inadequate to the office assigned to it, and in the other, our conduct is referred to the decision of mental feelings, which are by no means uniform amongst different nations, and which are as frequently made to sanction the atrocities of cruelty and vice, as the deeds of compassion and virtue. Constituted as the human faculties and affections are at present, to endeavour to persuade the great mass of mankind, or, indeed, any but visionary speculatists, who never mingle in the business and tumults

of the world, that they ought to practise virtue either exclusively for its own sake,*

* "Seized and rapt with this sublime idea, our philosophers do infinitely despise and pity whoever shall propose or accept any other motive to virtue."—*Bishop Berkeley's Minute Philosopher.* Dial. III. p. 113.

There is an observation of Dr. Adam Smith, when opposing the theory of *utility* in Morals, which is regarded by Dr. Brown in his answer to Hume, as possessing great weight:—Why do we not regard a chest of drawers (supposing that theory to be true) with the same feelings with which we contemplate the conduct of the Christian? We answer, and the answer entirely accords with Paley's system—because the one is a mass of inanimate matter, the other a rational and voluntary agent. Were the former capable of being influenced by motives, and consequently susceptible of merit and demerit, the question might be deemed pertinent.

In estimating the moral worth of a rational *agent*, it is not merely the tendency of the action that is to be taken into the account; it is essential (as Paley expressly declares in his chapter on utility) that we ascertain his *design.* A decided lunatic might possibly, by the donation of a considerable sum of money, confer an essential benefit on a particular individual; but, accord-

or from no other motive than the feeling of approbation which it inspires in the heart,

ing to the very theory which the distinguished Scotch professor condemns, he would be as devoid of merit as the steam-engine, or the printing-press, by which the welfare of society has been so much augmented. Unless the agent be in full possession of his rational faculties, and his will be entirely free from restraint, nothing he can do will entitle him to the faintest praise. But admitting this to be the case, there is still no incongruity whatever in believing that utility is the standard or criterion by which we are to determine whether an *action* be right or wrong. When Dr. Brown affirms that it is impossible to elude the force of Adam Smith's assertion, except by saying that it is only utility in certain voluntary actions of living beings that awakens approbation, and that by this limitation, the very point in question is conceded, we do not allow, (whatever may be the case with Hume,) that these allegations at all invalidate Paley's system. To institute a comparison between a passive, inert, material substance, utterly incapable of volition, and an intelligent, voluntary agent, susceptible of moral feelings, appears to me to be altogether absurd. But, if instead of the inanimate steam-engine or printing-press, be substituted the

is, I cannot help believing, to the last degree, idle and preposterous. Did no other more powerful incitement exist; if men were to depend solely upon the guidance of an internal monitor, neither imperative in its dictates, nor uniform in its effects; if they were told that the only attainable recompense for the noblest acts of generosity and valour, or the most painful exertions of forbearance and self-denial, would be the smiles of an approving conscience, "we may venture to affirm," in the language applied by Mr. Stewart to the theory of Dr. Paley, "that there would not

contrivers of these machines, the comparison involves nothing objectionable; for if it could be proved that the inventors were actuated by an earnest desire to increase the comfort and happiness of mankind, by introducing these mechanical contrivances into use, we should view them with the same feelings with which we regard an exemplary Christian. Still there is nothing in this statement to prevent our considering utility to be the rule of our moral actions, and the foundation of every moral precept. The *tendency* of the *action*, and the *design* of the *agent* are two distinct considerations.

be enough of virtue left in the world, to hold society together." * Let the Stoics con-

* Even Dr. Reid speaks in much more favourable terms of the motive to human conduct derived from individual happiness, than either his disciple, Mr. Stewart, or Dr. Brown, his frequent opponent. "We observed before, that the ancient moralists, and many among the modern, have deduced the whole of morals from this principle, (a regard to our own good,) and that when we make a right estimate of goods and evils, according to their degree, their dignity, their duration, and according as they are more or less in our power, it leads to the practice of every virtue: more directly, indeed, to the virtues of self-government, to prudence, to temperance, and to fortitude; and (though more indirectly,) even to justice, humanity, and all the social virtues, when their influence upon our happiness is well understood. Though it be not the noblest principle of conduct, it has this peculiar advantage, that its force is felt by the most ignorant, and even by the most abandoned.

"If a man can be induced to do his duty even from a regard to his own happiness, he will soon find reason to love virtue for her own sake, and to act from motives less mercenary.

tend that Regulus in the midst of torture, and with no consolation but that which flowed from the conviction of his own worth, was equally happy with Metellus, possessed of all that prosperity could afford, or wisdom desire.* The ethics of Chris-

"I cannot therefore approve of those moralists, who would banish all persuasives to virtue taken from the consideration of private good. In the present state of human nature, these are not useless to the best, and they are the only means left of reclaiming the abandoned."—*Reid on the Powers of the Human Mind*, Vol. III. Essay v. Chap. i.

These passages from Dr. Reid's principal work are not only replete with sound sense, but they are remarkable for containing the *substance of the very answer* given by those who adopt Paley's theory to the charge of *selfishness* so perpetually alleged against it; though Mr. Stewart calls that answer in its detail, nothing more than a refinement contrived to evade the force of the arguments that have been urged on the other side.

* The different opinions of the Epicureans, the Stoics, and the Peripatetics on the prolific topic of disputation which the ancients found in the *summum bonum*, are detailed with much interest in Cicero's treatise De

tianity, I apprehend, enforced as they are by the hopes and fears of futurity, would

Finibus. The decision of the Stoics on the happiness of Metellus may be seen in the fifth book, c. 28.—Metastasio has well expressed one of the most extravagant sentiments of this school of philosophy in his animated drama of "Attilio Regolo." Thus in Act III. Sc. iii. this is the language of Publius:

Sì, lo confesso,
Morir me sento;
Ma questo istesso
Crudel tormento
È il più bel merito
Del mio valor.

That an exclamation so apparently heroic may attract momentary applause, I will not deny, but when estimated by its practical influence, it will deserve, I fear, no better description than that of Magnifiche parole, belle ad udir.

After allowing all the praise that is due to many of the precepts and maxims of the Stoics, the character of the sect as delineated by La Bruyère contains, I really think, nothing more than is true.

"Le stoïcism est un jeu d'esprit, et une idée semblable à la république de Platon. Les Stoïques ont

be but ill exchanged for the dowerless philosophy of the Porch.*

feint qu'on pouvoit rire dans la pauvreté, être insensible aux injures, à l'ingratitude, aux pertes des biens, comme à celle des parens et des amis, regarder froidement la mort, et comme une chose indifférente qui ne devoit ni réjouir, ni rendre triste; n'être vaincu ni par le plaisir, ni par la douleur; sentir le fer ou le feu dans quelque partie de son corps sans pousser le moindre soupir, ni jetter une seule larme; et ce fantôme de vertu et de constance ainsi imaginé il leur a plu de l'appeler un sage. Ils ont laissé à l'homme tous les défauts qu'ils lui ont trouvés, et n'ont presque relevé aucun de ses foibles: au lieu de faire de ses vices des peintures affreuses ou ridicules qui servissent à l'en corriger, ils lui ont tracé l'idée d'une perfection, et d'un héroïsme dont il n'est point capable, et l'ont exhorté à l'impossible."—*Caractères*, chap. xi. *De l'Homme.*

* Among those writers on Morals, who maintain that virtue carries with it its own obligation, exclusively of all regard to the Divine will, and of all advantage attending the practice of it, few have expressed their sentiments more decidedly, and I may add, at the same time, with more inconsistency, than Dr. Samuel Clarke. After dwelling with great earnestness on the eternal ob-

Before the preceding pages were finished, a critique on the writings of Dr. Paley

ligation of virtue, the moment it is understood by the mind, and antecedently to every other consideration, he suddenly shrinks from his creed, and in reality gives up the point. "Though virtue is unquestionably worthy to be chosen for its own sake, (he observes,) even without any expectation of reward, yet it does not follow that it is therefore entirely self-sufficient, and able to support a man under all kinds of sufferings, and even death itself, for its sake, *without any prospect of future recompense.* Men never will generally, and indeed it is not very reasonable to be expected they should, part with all the comforts of life, and even life itself, without the expectation of any future recompense. So that if we suppose no future state of rewards, it will follow that God will have indued men with such faculties as put them under a necessity of approving and choosing virtue in the judgment of their own minds; and yet has not given them wherewith to support themselves in the suitable and constant practice of it. The consideration of which inexplicable difficulty ought to have led the philosophers to a firm belief and expectation of a future state of rewards and punishments, without which their whole scheme of morality cannot be supported."—*Evid. of Revealed Relig.* Prop. I. § 7.

appeared in a periodical publication of the present day widely circulated among the lovers of English literature, and though his works have for the most part been justly estimated, and his character ably vindicated by the author of the article in question, I by no means coincide with some of the remarks which have been applied to his Theory of Morals. The objections advanced by the reviewer do not, indeed, substantially differ from those of other authors, but still, considering the reputation of the Journal in which they appear, they ought not to be suffered to pass entirely unnoticed. One of his great objections to making utility the rule of our actions, is the fact that men neither do, nor can stop *to calculate the consequences* of their actions; for if they did not act instantaneously, it would in many cases be too late. In answer to this, it may be safely affirmed, (as I have intimated before,) that with respect to the great majority of human actions, there is not the slightest necessity for deliberation, and the fact is acknowledged by Paley himself in

a passage which I have already quoted from his chapter on War. Where the infant mind has been imbued with right principles, and where a course of moral discipline has been duly enforced, a facility of acting properly is imperceptibly produced, the dictates of duty are immediately followed, and the feeling of approbation or aversion arises at once, when virtuous or vicious conduct is presented to its view. That this moral judgment, and the sentiment by which it is accompanied, are *acquired*, and not coëval with the birth of the agent, is sufficiently evident, from the circumstance that they are not *universal*, where early education and discipline have been either erroneous or defective. It cannot possibly be disputed that a habit of approving virtue may be so assiduously instilled into the mind, long before the full development of its powers, as to become instantaneous in its operation; nor is the facility here spoken of, restricted to morals, but is acquired in numerous pursuits of human life, where the necessity of a peculiar faculty is never once imagined

to exist. But, however readily we may admit the justness of the foregoing observations, it is not to be disputed that many instances do occur in which a certain degree of deliberation becomes requisite, and where, yielding to the impulse of the moment, though apparently meritorious, would in truth be deserving of censure. This cannot be better exemplified than in the familiar instance of an immediate compliance with the application of mendicants for pecuniary relief. The feelings and the motives of the donor who yields to their solicitations, may, in themselves, be admitted to merit commendation, but yet the action, if unaccompanied by inquiry, would be decidedly wrong. If it be asked on what ground this judgment be founded, we answer, because instantaneous compliance might not only be prejudicial in that individual case, but would, if generally imitated, be most unquestionably injurious to the welfare of the community. Whenever deliberation is requisite, the only question is, to what standard we should refer for our

guidance, supposing the Scriptures to be silent respecting the particular point to be decided. Shall we have recourse to conscience, or to general expediency? In the case alluded to of vagrant beggars, conscience, we have seen, would too often lamentably deceive us, while a regard to the good of society would afford the best security to be obtained against serious error.

The instances adduced by the reviewer in favour of the doctrine which maintains that the faculty, usually denominated conscience, is originally implanted in the human breast, are, I must acknowledge, to my apprehension extremely unsatisfactory. Referring to the very interesting "Narrative of a Journey from Calcutta to Bombay," by the late lamented Bishop Heber, he remarks that the poor Hindoo, whom he describes as "a liar, and the worshipper of a lie, leaving his brother to perish by the way side, and not even robbing the vulture of his bones," the moment he hears a sentiment of natural mercy, or justice, or pity, drop from the lips of the bishop, instantly utters the

strongest expressions of approbation, dictated by the natural feelings of his heart. The fact here stated we attempt not to call in question; but still I would ask,—how does it happen that the same conscience, which gave rise to this warmth of applause on hearing the sentiments of this exemplary prelate, does not point out to them the heinousness of the crimes imputed to them by the reviewer, as well as of others of still deeper die mentioned by Dr. Buchanan, and by more recent travellers to our possessions in India? And yet it is well known that the natives are in the habit of committing these flagitious acts without the slightest hesitation, or the smallest degree of compunction.* A conscience thus

* "They are decidedly, by nature, a mild, pleasing, and intelligent race; sober, parsimonious; and when an object is held out to them, most industrious and persevering. But the magistrates and lawyers all agree, that in no country are lying and perjury so common, and so little regarded; and notwithstanding the apparent mildness of their manners, the criminal calendar is generally as full as in Ireland, with gang-robberies,

uncertain, thus contradictory, can surely be of but little advantage to the possessor, till corrected by rigid discipline; and the facts here stated afford a very unsatisfactory proof of its authority. Nor does the ap-

setting fire to buildings, stacks, &c.; and the *number of children who are decoyed aside, and murdered for the sake of their ornaments*, Lord Amherst assures me, is dreadful."—*Heber's Narrative*, Vol. III. p. 254.

Nor should I omit to mention the horrid practice, related by the Bishop, which prevailed till lately in Guzerât, and other western districts of India, of *murdering by far the greater part of the female infants*; a practice, which, though originating in pride and avarice, was strenuously defended by the natives! See *Heber's Narrative*, Vol. II. p. 518. Another nefarious custom of great antiquity has recently been prohibited by the English Government,—the annual *sacrifice of infants* by *their own mothers* to the Ganges, whose waters are deemed sacred, and are still worshipped by innumerable devotees!

Such are the atrocities of that part of the human species who are said to afford clear indications of an instinctive conscience, designed to be the guide of their conduct in life!

plauding acclamation of the lower class of the audience at a theatre, when any sentiment of generosity or compassion is uttered on the stage, furnish any conclusive argument in favour of an *instinctive* moral faculty. Relying, as he does, with confidence on this fact, the reviewer would undoubtedly regard, as a signal proof of the prevalence of the moral sense, the reception which the celebrated sentiment in Terence, met with from a Roman audience:

Homo sum, humani nil a me alienum puto.*

But, as Bishop Warburton well observes, this very same person, by whom these feeling expressions are pronounced, this humane Chremes, not only gave strict injunctions to Sostrata, his wife, to expose her new-born infant, but was afterwards filled with indignation, when he found that she had committed the charge to another person, and that by this act the child had been saved.

* Heautontimorumenos, Act I. Sc. i.

Tot peccata in hac re ostendis; nam jamprimum, si meum
Imperium exequi voluisses, interemptam oportuit.*

That the utterance of the noble sentiment in the early part of this drama called forth a burst of applause from every part of the theatre, is sufficiently testified by the records of antiquity; but does it appear from the same, or any other testimony, that the conduct of the father towards his innocent offspring, that his execrable design of committing infanticide, excited the slightest mark of reprobation? It is not, however, the reality of the feelings here described that I would call in question, but merely the origin to which they are attributed by the reviewer, and the proofs which he believes them to afford of an innate conscience. Do not the associations formed in early childhood, and the rules of conduct originating from the eternal condition in which mankind are born, or from the religion, whether true or false, of the country which they inhabit, furnish an adequate cause for

* Ibid. Act IV. Sc. 1.

the facts adduced by the reviewer, without unnecessarily resorting to any other source? The long-established maxim, "entia non sunt multiplicanda prœter necessitatem," though admitted in theory, is too often discarded in practice.

Nor must it be forgotten that the same individuals who display so much sensibility to the sentiments of honour and virtue when expressed on the stage, testify feelings of delight not less vehement at scenes and allusions which the Christian moralist would decidedly condemn. "What then" (to adopt the writer's own language) "would be the worth of such a principle in the actual affairs of the world?" But, notwithstanding this inconsistency, let it be observed, that the opponents of this school of ethics dispute not the fact of an immediate perception of right and wrong in the majority of cases, accompanied with feelings of approbation or aversion, more particularly where education has not been entirely neglected. All that they contend for is, that these moral perceptions and

feelings are not the result of an instinctive faculty, but are generated by the circumstances in which the mind is placed; that they afford a very insufficient guide in cases of difficulty and doubt; and that they may be ultimately traced to the original susceptibility of pleasure and pain, with which the human frame is unquestionably endowed.*

* Warburton, not less than the writer in question, believed in an instinctive moral sense, or conscience; but of what avail he considered it, we may collect from some of the observations which occur in his Divine Legation of Moses, when answering the objections of Bayle. "Of how great power custom is to erase the strongest impressions of nature, much stronger than those of the moral sense, we may learn from that general practice which prevailed in the most learned and polite countries of the world, *of exposing their children*, whereby the strongest instinctive affection for the offspring was violated without remorse. And what makes more particularly for my argument is, that custom is a power which opposes the moral sense, not partially or at certain times and places, but universally. If, therefore, custom in the politest states, where a Providence was

After an attentive consideration of the objections against Dr. Paley's theory, which

taught and acknowledged, made such havock of virtue, into what confusion must things run, where there is no other barrier than *the feeble idea of moral sense?*"

Though this renowned controversialist affirms that moral obligation consists in the will of God, it is nevertheless evident that in reality his opinion on this point differs but little from that of Paley. In the same chapter from which the former passage was taken, he thus expresses himself: "The question then is, whether a clear conviction of right and wrong, abstracted from all will and command, and consequently from the expectation of reward and punishment, be sufficient to influence the generality of mankind to any tolerable degree? That it is not, will, I suppose, be clearly seen by the following consideration:—All who have considered human nature attentively, have found that it is not enough to make men follow virtue that it be owned to be the greatest good, which the beauty, benefit, or rseaonableness of it may evince. It must first be brought home to them, and considered by them as a good that makes *a necessary part of their happiness*, before it can raise any desire in them." (Div. Legat. B. I. sect. 4.) Still stronger to the same purpose is the following passage:—"For if men do not follow the great-

have been adduced in the preceding pages, and viewing them in their strongest light, I confess that they appear to me to be utterly devoid of that solidity which has been attributed to them by their authors, and that no other theory hitherto offered to the world can boast of so decided a superiority as to be entitled to supersede that which is maintained by this celebrated moralist. Let it be conceded that his *definition* of virtue is, on the one hand, defective in the enumeration of the primary branches of duty, (though from the subsequent classification no inconvenience can occur to the student on that account) and that, on the other hand, it is redundant, by comprising in the statement the distinct question of

est confessed possible good till they consider it as making a necessary part of their happiness, I ask which is the likeliest means of bringing them so to consider it? Is it the reflection of the innate idea of *the loveliness of virtue?* Or the more abstract contemplation on *its essential difference to vice?* or is it not rather the belief, that the practice of virtue, as religion teaches it, is attended with an infinite reward?"—Ibid. B. I. Sec. v.

obligation; let it be admitted that he has not always expressed himself with the degree of caution so requisite in works of a didactic nature; and that some instances of inconsistency may be pointed out in his mode of reasoning: I am nevertheless decidedly of opinion that his main arguments are well founded, and that the leading principles he has adopted, though liable, like all others, to some objections, are substantially true. In every theory of morals proposed to our notice, there are three principal questions which demand consideration;—the source from which our moral sentiments are derived; the criterion or rule by which we are to be guided in our estimate of virtue; and, lastly, in what consists the obligation to practise it. In each of these particulars, the meaning of the writer whom I have here endeavoured to vindicate, has been too frequently misrepresented, and in each the imputations alleged by the opponents of his system may, if I am not egregiously mistaken, be satisfactorily refuted. With reference to the

first of these points, we have seen, that though he denies that the moral feelings are the result either of instinct or intuition, he admits that a provision is made for their generation in the mind by the necessary influence to which mankind are by nature exposed, contending, at the same time, that an adequate explanation may be given of their origin, by recurring to the effects of early education, to the imitative powers invariably displayed in infancy, and to the agency of that principle of association by which the mental operations are so universally affected. This mode of explaining the phenomena of our moral frame has the double advantage of not requiring the aid of any other causes than such as are familiar to our observation, and of easily accounting for those exceptions which we meet with in different states of society, and which, by the opposite hypothesis, are incapable of a satisfactory solution.* But in point of fact, to what-

* It is remarked by Bishop Sanderson, in his *Prelectiones de Conscientiâ* (delivered at Oxford during the

ever degree of consideration it may have been thought entitled by some philosophers,

civil wars,) as a singular circumstance, that throughout the whole of the Old Testament, no Hebrew word occurs which exactly corresponds with the English word *conscience*. The terms made use of by the sacred writers, as equivalent, are לב, לבב, and רוח, the heart, the spirit. In the New Testament, the term *συνείδησις*, *conscientia*, according to the statement of Schleusner and Wetstein, is used, in the modern signification of the word, in little more than twenty instances. In the Septuagint version, the Greek word is met with only once, and then as the translation of מדע, *scientia*. But little stress, however, is to be placed on these circumstances. The absence of the term in the Old Testament does not imply that the Hebrews were destitute of the power of moral discrimination, nor does the occurrence of the Greek word in the New Testament prove any thing more than the belief that such a faculty existed, without affording any intimation respecting its origin. Certain it is, that the inspired writings were not intended to correct errors in philosophy; but if any inference were allowable, I should be disposed to say, that the language of the Hebrew and the Christian Scriptures is, in its general import, more unfavour-

the question which involves the origin of our moral sentiments is not one of essential importance. The power of distinguishing certain actions which immediately excite our approbation, from others which excite the opposite emotion, is fully admitted to exist in the mind, whether according to some it originates in instinct, or in the estimation of others, it is altogether acquired. And hence even Mr. Stewart, in one of the earliest of his works, acknowledges that the theory which maintains the latter supposition does not tend "to weaken the foundation of morals," and that "it leads to no sceptical conclusions concerning the rule of life." * On the subject of the second

able to the supposition of a distinct moral sense, implanted in the breast to be the guide of our conduct, than to the doctrine which asserts that the moral judgment and feelings do not result from any *peculiar* faculty, but are produced by the circumstances in which the infant mind is placed, operating with great uniformity, though liable to occasional variations.

* "For although we were to grant," observes the author, "that all our principles of action are acquired,

question referred to,—the rule of virtue, the theory of our Cambridge divine, when disencumbered from the erroneous representations of those who deny its truth, amounts to no more than this; that whenever the light of Scripture is sufficient to enable us to discern the path of duty,—and

so striking a difference among them must still be admitted as is sufficient to distinguish clearly those universal laws which were intended to regulate human conduct from the local habits which are formed by education and fashion. It must still be admitted, that while some active principles are confined to particular individuals, or particular tribes of men, there are others which, arising from circumstances in which all the situations of mankind must agree, are common to the whole species: such active principles as fall under this last description, at whatever period of life they may appear, are to be regarded as a part of human nature, no less than the instinct of suction; in the same manner as the acquired perception of distance by the eye is to be ranked among the perceptive powers of man, no less than the original perceptions of any of our other senses." —*Elem. of the Philos. of the Human Mind.* Vol. I. p. 393. After these concessions, and after acknowledg-

in the majority of situations this is undoubtedly the case—our task is obvious and easy; but when the assistance of this guide is not to be obtained, it then becomes necessary to inquire what mode of conduct has the greatest tendency to promote the welfare of mankind; rationally concluding that such conduct must be most conformable to the will of a Being whom we believe to be possessed of infinite benevolence. To say that the inquiry must sometimes be attended with difficulty, or that it is perpetually liable to abuse, is to affirm nothing more than what is applicable to every system which has been proposed to

ing most explicitly, as this author does in the same page, that the theory in question does not appear to him to have any tendency to weaken the foundation of morals, nor to lead to any sceptical conclusions concerning the rule of life, what can be more idle, more truly inconsistent, than to oppose it, as he has done, with so much pertinacity, in his subsequent publications? In truth, his adversaries cannot wish for a more satisfactory confession.

the world, since Ethics became a topic of philosophical disquisition. Does it appear that the dictates of conscience, or the fitness of things, or the spontaneous suggestions of the understanding, or the criterion insisted upon by Mr. Gisborne, are in the slightest degree less susceptible of perversion, or more within the grasp of the mental faculties? As subordinate means, let it be conceded that they may sometimes afford assistance in cases of perplexity; yet as a permanent mode of ascertaining the will of the Deity, when not evident from Scripture, the tendency of an action to promote the well-being of society, or, in other words, its utility, is, I must still think, of all others the most likely to afford to the inquirer the best security against error in the formation of his private judgment, and more particularly in the construction of general rules. It is undoubtedly singular, that in selecting the definition which we have admitted to be objectionable, it did not occur to this acute reasoner, that whoever makes the will of the Deity to be the

criterion of virtue, must of course make virtue consist in compliance with that will. That such was his real opinion is obvious from various parts of his work; and it is not less obvious that this opinion perfectly accords with his assertion, that "whatever is expedient is right," because the Divine will must at all times be coincident with the general welfare of mankind.

And, lastly, in adverting to the principle of moral *obligation* supported by Dr. Paley, I would ask,—has the charge of selfishness, which has been so vehemently urged against it by some of his opponents, and particularly by Dr. Brown, been more successfully established than the other objections against his theory? There is no system of morals whatever, I do not hesitate to affirm, which more strongly enforces the necessity of *disinterestedness*, as far as it relates to the *present* world, than that which has been thus inconsiderately and unjustly accused, and which merely maintains that the promised felicity of another state of being is the ultimate motive to moral obedience, and fur-

nishes the only conclusive answer to the question, Why are we obliged to practise virtue? Nor does the able advocate of this system deny, that those who have reached the highest elevation of moral excellence attainable by human nature, may lose sight, for a time, of all future recompense, and derive the purest pleasure from the exercise of those virtuous habits which a long course of discipline may have taught them to frame. In fine, it may be truly affirmed, that if there be any real cause for the apprehension of danger in the *rule* which he has endeavoured to establish, the same cause is in no degree less prominent in the systems of those who are most strenuously opposed to him; and if the *motive* he has described as constituting the *obligation* be represented as interested and degrading, it is precisely the same motive which is urged in almost every page of the New Testament. If the imputation be admissible in the one case, it may be applied with at least equal justice in the other. Whether the stigma, however, of selfishness be deem-

ed applicable or not, let it not escape our recollection, that the paramount duties of Christianity were never attempted to be enforced by its great Founder, and his disciples, without appealing to the hopes and fears of those whose conduct and character it was their object to reform.

Convinced as I am of the truth of Dr. Paley's theory of morals when properly explained, and believing that the objections which have been urged by those of his opponents, who are most likely to influence the sentiments of others, may be satisfactorily refuted, I am, nevertheless, by no means insensible that it might have been more effectually rescued from misconception, had its celebrated supporter been more attentive to precision in his language, and more disposed to listen to the suggestions of contemporary writers. If, instead of his present definition of virtue, another had been substituted more consistent with the general principles of the work, and more accurately expressed; if utility had been described to be the *best* criterion of

virtue whenever it can be ascertained, instead of the only one; and if the obligation insisted on had been uniformly called the *ultimate* motive (for in this light it is always intended to be viewed), though the arguments would for the most part have remained the same, the frame-work, if I may so call it, of the system, would have been so far improved as to be less liable to excite the prejudices of some, and less exposed to the cavils and unfounded accusations of others. In all its essential parts, I still think, this theory will bear the test of the severest examination, and will survive every effort to destroy its stability.

That some of the other opinions contained in this author's "Principles of Moral and Political Philosophy" are obnoxious to just animadversion, I am far from being disposed to deny; yet, taken as a whole, we may in vain search for any work in this department of knowledge, in the English language, which, for clear and forcible reasoning, for liberal and manly sentiment, for happiness of illus-

tration, and for uniform candour in the discussion of controverted topics, has an equal claim to the high reputation it has so long enjoyed, or to the patronage which it continues to receive from that learned and venerable body, for the improvement of whose academic system it was originally composed. Nor can I conclude without remarking, though the remark forms no part of the argument, that whatever may be the errors imputed to this eminent man by his opponents, whatever the occasional inconsistency in his manner of expressing himself, acknowledged by his friends, his two incomparable chapters, the one "on Happiness," in his Moral Philosophy, and the other on "the Goodness of the Deity," in his Natural Theology, would alone be sufficient to immortalize his name, and deserve to be transmitted for the instruction and consolation of mankind to the latest ages of the world.

APPENDIX.

APPENDIX.

Containing a few Animadversions on some Remarks of Dr. Whately, Principal of St. Alban's Hall, Oxford, relative to the subject of the present Inquiry.

When we perceive the doctrines and principles of Dr. Paley misunderstood and misrepresented by men of narrow views and superficial attainments, we perceive nothing more than what we might naturally expect; but it is not a little surprising to find the same cause of complaint among writers of deeper reflection, who, we might imagine, would observe a greater degree of accuracy in stating the opinions of others. In a publication of acknowledged merit on the subject of logic by Dr. Whately of Oxford, a

very erroneous representation of Dr. Paley's principles is placed before the student, in a note on the ambiguities of the word *Reason;* sufficient to show how little consideration the former had bestowed on the system of Ethics against which his sarcasms are so injudiciously aimed. "The moral faculty," he observes, (p. 302,) "or power of distinguishing right from wrong, is one of which brutes are destitute. But then Dr. Paley, and some other ethical writers, deny it to man also. The description given by that author of our discernment of good and bad conduct, (viz. as wholly dependent on reward and punishment,) would equally apply to many of the brute creation, especially the dog." In the first place, I must beg leave to reply to this observation, that the language of Paley can never be interpreted, even with the most forced construction, into a denial that man possesses the faculty of distinguishing right from wrong. It must be obvious, I should have thought, to every reader not prepossessed against the author, that he admits the

existence of this faculty in its fullest extent; but respecting its *origin*, he undoubtedly differs most widely from those who contend for an instinctive or intuitive moral sense. On this question his opinions nearly coincide with those of Locke and Hartley. In the next place, Paley does not represent "our discernment of good and bad conduct," as dependent on the expectation of reward and punishment; nor has he in any instance confounded two points so essentially different, as the criterion and the obligation. When men have acquired a knowledge of their duty from Scripture, or, where that is silent, from the tendency of actions to promote the welfare of society, what is the inducement which will be found paramount to every other in producing compliance? Paley answers, and, as I conceive, truly answers—the prospect of an infinite reward in another state of being. Dr. Whately affirms that this principle (the same in its nature, though not in its extent) is equally applicable to brutes; and he attributes to the dog a feeling of expectation

tantamount to foresight, of which no facts hitherto adduced in natural history can be deemed a sufficient proof. Nothing, indeed, can be more certain, than that the dog and the horse are trained into regularity and habitual submission, by a course of early and often rigid discipline. Must we on that account, therefore, refuse to believe that the moral habits of the human race also are formed by salutary discipline, and can, in truth, be formed by no other means?

Dr. Whately appears to have forgotten, when he passed these severe censures on Paley's theory, that one of his favourite authors, Archbishop King, entertained sentiments, with regard to the foundation of virtue, extremely similar to those of the former. As in a preceding page I have quoted two passages from the "Origin of Evil" on this particular point, I will merely add the following in confirmation of what is there asserted.

The archbishop, when combating an objection against one of his arguments—that it makes God require the several virtues

from men, not because they are morally good, but because of the advantages which they produce, thus expresses himself:* "To this I answer, that the author (meaning himself) has showed in his book that moral evil is founded on natural, and that in the state of nature before revelation, men had no way to know what free acts were good or pleasing to God, but *by observing what was advantageous to particular men, or to society*. Observe all the laws of nature, and you will find them discovered and proved from this sole principle, as is manifest from all the books that treat of them. To pretend, therefore, that the natural mischiefs arising from vice, do not prove them to be morally evil, is an uncommon way of thinking; since the very argument whereby we prove them *morally evil*, is because they are *pernicious*." In another passage in the same note, speaking of the natural turpitude of vice, he remarks—"In like manner, the turpitude of vices does not arise from the

* Chap. V. Sect. i. Subsect. 4. Note (R.)

simple nature of actions, but from some adventitious circumstances *which bring evil on them;* and as they are undue and heterogeneous, they, as it were, defile those actions to which they adhere."—With respect to this celebrated work of Archbishop King, the reasoning contained in the first four chapters on the evil of defect, and on natural evil, is, I think, rational and satisfactory, as far as it extends, considering the obscurity in which the disquisition is involved; but when he comes to treat of the origin of *moral* evil, he seems to be totally unable to contend with the difficulty of his subject.* The hypothesis by

* Agreeing, as I do, with the opinion of Sherlock, Dr. King, and many other divines, that *moral* evil consists in the *voluntary* production of natural evil, the argument derived from a gradation of ranks in the universe, has always appeared to me as possessing great weight. If it be asked why man was not created less subject to bodily pain and the calamities of accident, less exposed to temptation, and less prone to moral delinquency, it might be answered, that to whatever finite height he might be raised in the scale, the same ques-

which he attempts to reconcile the different solutions of the long-debated question would still recur. There would be no termination to these unreasonable demands till the insatiable imagination had arrived at a state of existence so exalted that it would be impossible for the Almighty to increase its enjoyment. And if one class is to be elevated to such a state, why not all classes down to the lowest forms of animated matter? But what, let us for one moment ask, would be the inference to be deduced from this constitution of things? No other than this—that it would be utterly impossible to add to the happiness of a single individual throughout the vast regions of the universe. There could be no progress from lower to higher degrees, no possible improvement in knowledge and virtue, no room for the exertion of omnipotence itself. We must imagine the boundless attributes of the Deity to be absolutely exhausted; and if the supposition of a limited infinity be not one of the grossest of all absurdities, no absurdity can be framed by the wildest fancy. Hence a gradation of ranks appears to be inevitable, and if a gradation, then imperfection and evil follow in its train. It is sufficient for us to be assured, that the good greatly preponderates over the evil, and that intelligent creatures possess the capacity of continually rising from

tion respecting liberty and necessity, is as curious as it is unfounded; namely, that the will possesses the power of rendering things agreeable which were before indifferent, merely by its own agency. Numerous actions, therefore, we are told, afford pleasure to the agent, not because they are good in themselves, but solely because they are the objects of choice, and derive all their goodness from the very act of election! The notes of Bishop Law to the first part of this treatise contain many valuable, and some very profound remarks, but as soon as he undertakes the defence of his author's

one degree of happiness and perfection to another, without ever approaching to a termination of their advancement. Better, therefore, would it become those whose minds are disturbed by objections of this nature, to follow the advice of our great moral poet:

> Submit—in this, or any other sphere,
> Secure to be as blest as thou canst bear;
> Safe in the hands of one disposing Power,
> Or in the natal, or the mortal hour.
>
> *Essay on Man*, I. 285.

singular hypothesis, his efforts are as little successful in producing conviction as those of the latter. Both the comment and the text have equally failed.

I confess that, in common with many others, I felt no less regret than surprise on seeing the republication, by Dr. Whately, of Archbishop King's Sermon on *Predestination*. The doctrine which it inculcates on the subject of *analogy* is not merely censurable as an attempt to remove one perplexity by adopting * another, but is completely destructive of all just views of the divine attributes, and may be successfully employed by the abettors of Calvinism, in establishing some of its most revolting tenets. Speaking of the foreknowledge and pre-determination of the Supreme Being, as compared with ours, the author of the Discourse observes, that "they are quite of another nature, and that we have

* Ἐνταῦθα μέντοι πᾶντα τ' ἀνθρωπων νοσεῖ
Κακοῖς ὁταν θέλωσιν ἰᾶσθαι κακα.

Sophocles apud Stobæum.

no proper notion of them any more than a man born blind has of sight and colours." And this assertion he considers as equally applicable to the *moral* attributes of the Deity. * Hence it follows as a necessary

* "To give no other account of the nature of God and his ways, than that they are unintelligible, is to encourage the atheist, and to yield him the day. Unless we will entangle ourselves with making good some fictitious attributes of God, or defend his providence upon false suppositions and circumstances, there will be no greater entanglements touching the notion of God and his providence, than there would be in the nature of those things we are sure do exist, though there were no God in the world. Wherefore, let me advise you to this, since you have such fast and certain hold of the existence of the Deity, by the repeated effects thereof in nature, not to let that hold go upon any grounds that are uncertain or false. For the Scripture declares nothing contradictory touching the nature of God; nor is there any human authority that has any right to be believed when it propounds contradictions: nor are we bound to burthen the notion of a Deity with any thing we are not assured implies perfection. These cautions if we use, no man, I think, need be much entangled in his

deduction, that if benevolence and justice be different qualities, as they exist in the divine nature, from what they are in man, then to select a small portion of the human race for the purpose of conferring on them, without the slightest regard to merit or demerit, consummate and eternal bliss, and at the same time to doom a tremendous majority, in no respect more criminal than the former, to endless torments, may be just and benevolent in the highest degree! But these conclusions do not, perhaps, present to Dr. Whately's mind obstacles to the reception of that repulsive system so formidable as they must to the minds of other anti-calvinists, since in a more recent publication on the difficulties of St. Paul's writings, he places before us a far more favourable picture of Calvinism than a reference to the statements of its principal advocates will be found to justify; and

thoughts touching the nature of the Deity."—*Divine Dialogues by Dr. Henry More.* Dial. I. p. 29. Second Edit. 1713.

though he avers his disbelief that the *peculiar* doctrines of predestinarians are *revealed*, he yet confesses that he is "far from deciding that they are altogether untrue."* This concession appears to me to be fraught with consequences which no rational Christian can view without painful emotions; for though some of the more enlightened defenders of the Calvinistic tenets, who occasionally appear, have evidently been influenced by the increased liberality of the age, to divest their system of a portion of the harshness so repugnant to the feelings of their adversaries, we must still call to mind, that by this procedure they are departing from the original doctrines which were handed down to their ancestors by St. Augustine, Godeschalc, and Calvin. The Calvinism contemplated by Dr. Whately is not the Calvinism of Knox, of Owen, of Jonathan Edwards, nor of Mr. Vaughan of Leicester. Who, I may venture to ask, but a rigid disciple of the Genevan reformer, could ever persuade him-

* See Essay III. on Election.

self that doctrines so terrific can be founded in truth, on the supposition that the Supreme Being is possessed, I will not say of infinite benevolence, for that would be out of the question, but of *common justice*, in the sense usually annexed to that term? "Shall mortal man be more just than God?"* But if malignity in man is no malignity when ascribed to the Deity, then the greater part of the sacred writings either have no meaning at all, or one which must excite horror in every mind not absolutely insensible to the feelings of compassion.

The distinction on this point most worthy of reception, and most consistent with the natural sentiments of mankind, is that which is stated by Bishop Berkeley, in his *Minute Philosopher*, and which has been adopted by the great majority of the most rational and eminent of our theological writers. Whenever any of the senses or bodily members belonging to man, or any of the evil passions, are ascribed in the Scriptures to the great Author of the universe, the expres-

* Job iv. 17.

sions are to be regarded as metaphorical, because nothing which implies defect can possibly reside in the Divine nature. But with respect to qualities and attributes, which in themselves, abstractedly considered, denote perfection, the case is widely different; and in this class we must comprehend knowledge, wisdom, foresight, power, benevolence, justice, and mercy. When these, therefore, are attributed to the Divinity, the language is no longer to be considered as metaphorical, nor even as analogical, in the sense maintained by Bishop Brown, and Archbishop King. To affirm that these qualities are not the same in their nature, when predicated of the Creator, as those which we designate by the same names as existing in his creatures, is at once to render nugatory some of the plainest and most important precepts in the New Testament.* The only difference

* "We will, therefore, acknowledge that all those natural effects which are vulgarly ascribed to knowledge and wisdom, proceed from a being in which there is,

to be remarked is, that in the one case they are infinite in degree, and exempt

properly speaking, no knowledge or wisdom at all, but only something else, which, in reality, is the cause of those things which men, for want of knowing, ascribe to what they call knowledge, and wisdom, and understanding.—And now that we have granted to you that there is a God in this indefinite sense, I would fain see what use you can make of this concession. You cannot argue from unknown attributes, or, which is the same thing, from attributes in an unknown sense. You cannot prove that God is to be loved for his goodness, or feared for his justice, or respected for his knowledge: all which consequences, we own, would follow from those attributes admitted in an intelligible sense. But we deny that those or any other consequences can be drawn from attributes admitted in no particular sense, or in a sense which none of us understand."—Bishop Berkeley's Alciphron, or the Minute Philosopher. Dialogue IV. § 18: "A book," says Mr. Stewart, "which, notwithstanding a few paradoxical passages connected with the author's system of idealism, may be safely recommended as one of the most instructive, as well as entertaining works, of which English philosophy has to boast." I cannot help adding, that the student who should read

from every alloy, while in the other case they are finite in extent, and mingled with imperfection.

According to the assertion of Dr. King, we can acquire no conception of the Divine attributes except from their effects. That such is the case we pretend not to dispute. And how, I would ask in reply, do we become acquainted with the qualities of men, but from their effects? Why then should we not ascribe similar effects in both cases to similar causes, where no degree of imperfection would be implied in the Divine nature? Since there cannot be a question that we are altogether ignorant of mind, otherwise than from the qualities which it perceptibly exhibits, and since the author of the Discourse acknowledges, that though

the Archbishop's discourse on predestination, and neglect to devote an equal share of attention to the fourth dialogue of the *Minute Philosopher*, would be acting almost as unfairly as if he were to study "Hume's Essay on Miracles," without afterwards examining the answers of Dr. Campbell or Bishop Douglas.

the physical and moral attributes of the Deity are entirely different from those bearing the same name in man, he must yet possess "either these or other faculties and powers equivalent to them, and adequate to the mighty effects proceeding from them," the whole partakes more of verbal disputation than of solid argument. The purpose, however, to which this analogical principle is applied by the learned prelate, sufficiently explains the cause of his placing so much stress on it; nor can there be a doubt that the sole reason why it has been recently revived, or, I should rather say, attempted to be revived, by some few of our theologians, (for happily they are but few,) is the impossibility of reconciling the Divine foreknowledge with absolute contingency, by the common arguments employed on that point, and the short method thus afforded them, as they conceived, of avoiding a difficulty which they found themselves unequal to combat, and the solution of which had baffled the efforts of so many distinguished polemics.

This remark, however, I must add, is not applicable to Dr. Whately himself.

In the second appendix of this author, to the sermon on which he has bestowed, I cannot but think, so much unmerited praise, he has not only made the same unfounded accusation against Paley, to which I have just alluded, but he has also viewed it as the ground of serious objection against the reasoning contained in that author's inestimable publication on the "Evidences of the Existence and Attributes of the Deity."

Dr. Whately observes, that our notions of the moral attributes of the Supreme Being are not derived solely from the contemplation of the created universe; but that man, having in himself a moral faculty by which he is instinctively led to approve virtue and disapprove vice, is thence inclined antecedently to attribute to the Creator of the universe all those moral (as well as intellectual) qualities, which in his own judgment, seem the most worthy of admiration, and intrinsically excellent. This

omission in the "Natural Theology" of our Cambridge moralist, is regarded by the Oxford divine as leaving a flaw in the argument.* In reply to this objection,

* To prevent misapprehension, I will quote the author's own words. "Our notions of the moral attributes of the Deity are not derived (as Dr. Paley contends they are) from a bare contemplation of the created universe, without any notions of what is antecedently probable, to direct our observations. Nor is it true (few indeed would now, I apprehend, assent to that part of his doctrine) that man has no moral faculty—no natural principle of preference for virtue rather than vice —benevolence rather than malice; but that being compelled by the view of the universe to admit that God is benevolent, is thence led, from prudential motives alone, to cultivate benevolence in himself, with a view to secure a future reward. The truth, I conceive, is exactly the reverse of this; viz. that man having in himself a moral faculty, or taste, as some prefer to call it, by which he is instinctively led to approve virtue and disapprove vice, is thence disposed and inclined antecedently, to attribute to the Creator of the universe, the most perfect, and infinitely highest of beings, all those moral (as well as intellectual) qualities, which to himself seem most worthy of admiration, and intrinsically beautiful

I would observe, that if Dr. Whately means to censure Dr. Paley for not attributing to

and excellent: for to do evil rather than good, appears to all men (except to those who have been very long hardened and depraved by the extreme of wickedness) to imply something of weakness, imperfection, corruption, and degradation. I say "disposed and inclined," because our admiration for benevolence, wisdom, &c. would not *alone* be sufficient to make us attribute these to the Deity, if we saw *no* marks of them in the creation; but our finding in the creation many marks of contrivance, and of beneficial contrivance, *together with* the antecedent bias in our minds which inclines us to attribute goodness to the Supreme Being,—*both these conjointly* lead us to the conclusion, that God is infinitely benevolent, notwithstanding the admixture of evil in his works, which we cannot account for. But these appearances of evil would stand in the way of such a conclusion, if man really were what Dr. Paley represents him, a being destitute of all moral sentiment, all innate and original admiration for goodness: he would in that case be more likely to come to a conclusion, (as many of the heathen seem actually to have done), that the Deity was a being of a mixed, or of a capricious nature; an idea which, shocking as it is to every well-constituted mind,

the Deity those qualities which man feels existing in his own mental constitution,

would not be so, in the least, to such a mind as Dr. Paley attributes to the whole human species."—(Republication of Abp. King's Discourse on Predestination, by Dr. Whately, Appendix. No. II. p. 119.) The preceding representation of Paley's opinions, is not only ill-founded, but is expressed in a tone which betrays a strong feeling of prejudice against that most rational and amiable philosopher. In the first place, he nowhere affirms, (as I have so often repeated,) that man is destitute of moral sentiment, and all admiration of goodness. He is certainly averse to admit that these sentiments are *innate*;—but does it follow that they are the less real on that account? How many tastes does a man *acquire* in his progress from infancy to manhood! But will any one dispute their reality, because he was not born with them? In the second place, there is no pretence for saying that those who entertain the opinions of that moralist, would be most likely to conclude, from the admixture of evil with good in the world, that the Deity was a being of a mixed or a capricious nature. The mere contemplation of the phenomena that come under our own observation, is sufficient to prove the contrary. Evil in various forms we undoubtedly ex-

and of which he is said to derive the proof solely from an *instinctive* moral sense or conscience, the latter acted judiciously, in my apprehension, in not making a *disputed* faculty the foundation of an important argument. But if the former writer means

perience in ourselves, and witness in others; but it is impossible not to perceive, at the same time, such a *preponderance* of good, as to convince us that the Supreme Author of the Universe is neither malignant in his disposition, nor indifferent to the welfare of his creatures? We cannot then hesitate for a moment in acknowledging his benevolence. But whatever quality can be proved to belong to a *self-existent* and *eternal* Being, can have no possible limitation. He who can believe, that perfection and imperfection, infinite and finite, can reside in the same intelligent nature, would not scruple to admit the grossest contradiction proposed to his assent. And hence we must necessarily infer, that the evils observable in the creation were not only *designed*, but designed for effectuating the wisest and most beneficent purposes. Why the same portion of good could not be accomplished without the instrumentality of evil, is indeed a question confessedly too difficult for the human faculties to explain.

to affirm that Paley disbelieved altogether the reality of any moral faculty, and that consequently he was unable to make use of the argument which he is charged with omitting, I must repeat that nothing can be more erroneous and unfair than this reiterated insinuation. To any person who has read his works uninfluenced by prejudice, it must be obvious that he was as firmly convinced as any man can be, that the human mind has the power of discriminating between right and wrong, and that the moral judgment, when formed, is attended with feelings of approval or disapproval. Dr. Whately believes this faculty to be instinctive, Mr. Stewart maintains that it is intuitive, and Dr. Paley that it is acquired. And if we admit the last case to be established, will it not answer every practical purpose, with the same facility, as if we referred the origin to instinct or intuition, and without having recourse to more causes than are requisite to account for the effects? Why impart to the human race any faculty or power, which from

their mental constitution they are capable of attaining? To suppose the intervention of divine agency in cases where the operation of human means would be perfectly adequate, is to suppose what we never meet with in the economy of nature, and which, if proved, would certainly afford no very striking indication of superior wisdom.

That those qualities observable in the human mind, which imply any degree of excellence in themselves, afford one proof of their existence in the Supreme First Cause, is most undoubtedly true; but as this mode of reasoning is of a more speculative nature, it was not without cause omitted by Dr. Paley, as being less suited to produce conviction in the understandings of the majority of his readers than the innumerable evidences derived from the system of the world around us. The arguments taken from the external phenomena of nature are at once comprehended by those who are little accustomed to extend their thoughts beyond the objects of sense, and will consequently to them, at

least, appear more conclusive. And with regard to the *exceptions* which present themselves in considering the moral attributes of the Divine nature, they will require the same explanation, whether we select one or both of the modes of proof here alluded to. That the physical and moral attributes of the Divinity are, in the strictest sense, *infinite*, both in degree and extent, would still remain to be proved; and this indeed can be effected only by the argument which I have adduced in the last preceding note.

Had it been the design of that author, in his incomparable work on "Natural Theology," to enter into a metaphysical discussion of the question, I should say that his argument was defective in a point of much greater consequence than that specified by Dr. Whately; since no regular answer is given to a formidable objection of Hume, which, if well founded, would place an insuperable obstacle to every proof that could be offered of the being and perfections of the Deity. It is maintained

by this acute sceptic, that all we know of *causation* amounts to nothing more than this, —that there is a *constant conjunction* observavable between certain events, but that between what we term cause and effect, we cannot prove any *necessary connexion;* * and hence it follows, that observation and experience will not enable us to demonstrate that the universe is the effect of creative intelligence. "When two *species* of objects have always been observed to be conjoined together, I can infer, by custom, the existence of one wherever I see the existence of the other; and this I call an argument from experience. But how this argument can have place where the objects, as in the present case, are single, individual, without parallel, or specific resemblance, may be difficult to explain. And will any man tell me with a serious countenance, that an orderly universe must arise from some thought and art, like the human, because we have experience of it? To ascertain

* See Hume's Essay on Cause and Effect.

this reasoning, it were requisite that we had experience of the origin of worlds; and it is not sufficient, surely, that we have seen ships and cities arise from human art and contrivance."*

Considering the popular character which Paley intended should distinguish his work, he wisely avoided a formal refutation of this sophistry of Hume, though he has in effect answered a most material part of it by reasoning from an axiom, which to every sound understanding must appear at once indisputable,—that the adaptation of means to an end necessarily implies contrivance, and that contrivance cannot exist without a contriver. A stricter scrutiny will enable us to perceive, that between the contrivance carried into execution, and the mind of the contriver, there is not merely a constant conjunction, or the invariable antecedence of one event to another, but that *necessary connexion* which is usually implied between what Mr. Stewart properly defines to be an *efficient* cause, and its effect. Nor is

* See Hume's Dialogues concerning Natural Religion. Part II. p. 300. Edit. Edin. 1793.

there any occasion for that resemblance between different effects, which is contended for by Hume, before we can infer an intelligent cause. It is sufficient, to authorise this inference, that we can discover an adjustment of means to some important end. But, to pursue this question further would be irrelevant to the immediate purpose of these observations.

Before I dismiss the subject, I cannot avoid remarking that the eminent writer, to whom Dr. Whately appeals in confirmation of his position, not only expresses himself as happy in being able to give his *unqualified praise* to Dr. Paley's work on "Natural Theology," but affords an additional authority against that analogical mode of describing the physical and moral attributes of the Deity, to which Abp. King and his commentators are so strongly attached.* Among many passages which might be selected from different parts of Mr. Stewart's

* I need scarcely remind those who are conversant with the subject, that the same opinion was entertained by Hobbes and Hume. It is curious to remark the

works, I will cite two only from the second volume of his "Philosophy of the Active and Moral Powers of Man,"

similarity of the language adopted by the latter philosophical unbeliever to that of the Irish prelate. "But as all perfection is entirely relative, we ought never to imagine that we comprehend the attributes of the Divine Being, or to suppose that his perfections have any analogy or likeness to the perfections of a human creature. Wisdom, thought, design, knowledge; these we justly ascribe to him, because these words are honourable among men, and we have no other language or other conceptions by which we can express our adoration of him. But let us beware, lest we think that our ideas *anywise correspond* to his perfections, or that his attributes have *any resemblance* to these qualities among men."—*Hume's Dialogues concerning Natural Religion*. Part. II. p. 491. Edit. 1793. I would not, for a moment, however, be understood to insinuate that, in any other particular, there subsists the slightest similarity between the sentiments of the Primate of Ireland, and the English historian. That the principles of the latter were truly atheistical, there cannot be a particle of doubt. He who denies that we can prove the existence of a creative cause of the universe, unless we

sufficient to evince the truth of my assertion.* "In entering on this subject, (evidences of benevolent design in the universe,) we may lay it down as a fundamental principle, that our ideas of the moral attributes of God must be derived from our own moral perceptions. It is only by attending to these that we can form a conception of what his attributes are, and it is in this

have *experience of the origin of worlds*, must, whatever he may consider himself, be neither more nor less than an atheist. If, by the term *experience*, he means personal experience, he was sufficiently aware of the impossibility, that every individual of the human race should possess that evidence. If he intended to signify the experience of others, we must then call to mind that we can become acquainted with that experience by no other means than by *testimony*. But it is one of Hume's favourite maxims, that no testimony, however powerful, can prove a miracle, and such to man must be the creation of a world. The necessary inference is, that the existence of a Deity cannot be established.

* Vol. II. p. 109.

way we are furnished with the strongest proofs that they really belong to him." In a subsequent page he observes,*—" But not to insist on this metaphysical view of the subject, it is evident that if we believe that we have derived our existence from the Deity, we must ascribe to him, in an infinite degree, all those powers and perfections which he has communicated to us, or which he has rendered us capable of acquiring. From our own imperfect *knowledge* we must ascribe to him *omniscience ;* from our limited *power* we must ascribe to him *omnipotence ;* and *a fortiori*, from our moral perceptions we must ascribe to him unerring moral rectitude, and goodness unbounded towards all his creation. In opposition to this mode of reasoning, sceptics have frequently urged the impropriety of forming a deity after our own image, and have represented the argument I stated for the moral attributes of God, as arising from the same illusion of the imagination which

* Vol II. p. 111.

leads the vulgar to ascribe to him the human form, and organs of perception analogous to our own. But the comparison is by no means just, &c." Enough has been said to show that Mr. Stewart's notions of *analogy* differ widely from those embraced by the archbishop and his disciples.

But since Dr. Whately's opinion on this question is thus altogether at variance with Mr. Stewart's, it is not a little singular that it should escape his observation, that in the animadversions he has hazarded, and which I could not consistently allow to pass unnoticed, he has exhibited a palpable instance of self-contradiction. He first contends, that the moral and physical qualities of the Deity are totally different in their nature from those bearing the same name in man, and he then censures Dr. Paley for not deriving the principal proof of the moral perfections of the Almighty, from the moral distinctions perceptible by the human mind; that is, for not ascribing to the Deity those qualities in man which the same author had be-

fore denied could exist in the Divine nature in any other sense than that which is derived from analogy. No exception is made in the theory embraced by the archbishop and his partisans which can be deemed at all favourable to Dr. Whately's statement, since the doctrine which they advocate is extended not less to the moral than to the intellectual attributes of the Supreme Intelligence. I will only ask, therefore, if these qualities, as they exist in the Creator and his rational creatures, are not of the same *nature*, (for in their extent the difference is admitted to be infinite,) what legitimate deductions can possibly be established by arguing from one to the other? Were, in short, the mode of applying analogical reasoning, which has been adopted by this particular class of Divines ever generally received in the latitude for which they contend, it is not too much to affirm, that there is scarcely any doctrine, however extravagant, scarcely any external rites, however deformed by

superstition, which might not be made to assume the appearance of truth and rectitude, and which, with a slight effort of ingenuity, might not be so interpreted to the multitude, as to be thought consistent with the language of the sacred writings.

THE END.

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